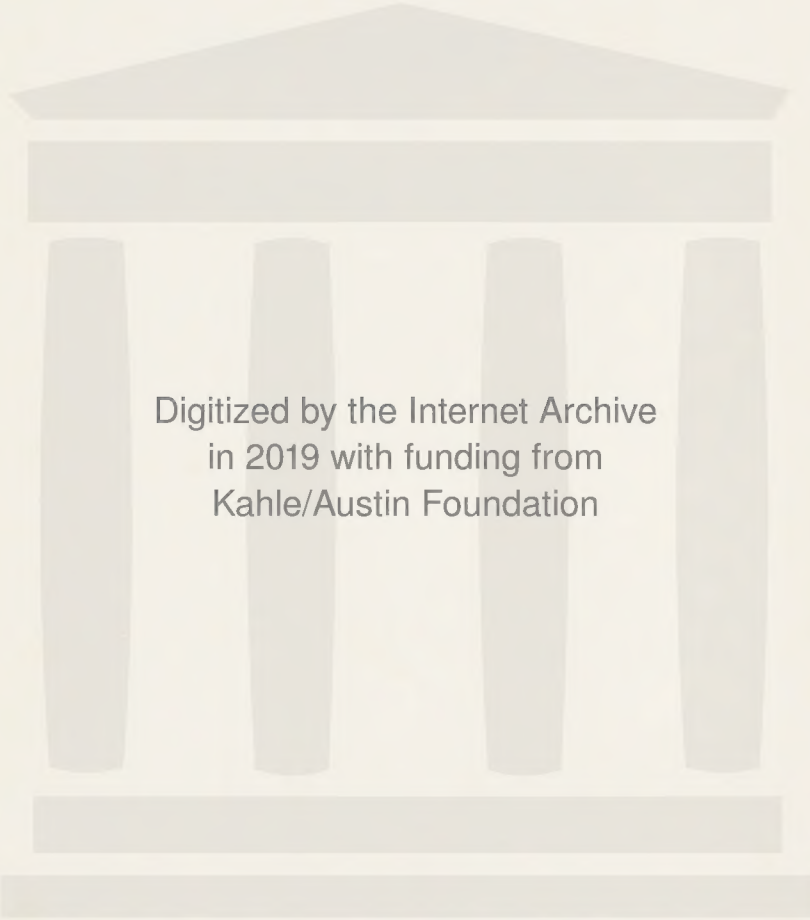




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THE ARMIES  
OF THE  
FIRST FRENCH REPUBLIC



THE ARMIES  
OF THE  
FIRST FRENCH REPUBLIC  
AND THE RISE OF THE MARSHALS  
OF NAPOLEON I

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THE ARMY OF ITALY  
1796 TO 1797  
PARIS AND THE ARMY OF THE INTERIOR  
1792 TO 1797, AND  
THE *COUP D'ÉTAT* OF FRUCTIDOR  
SEPTEMBER 1797

---

By the late  
COLONEL RAMSAY WESTON PHIPPS  
Formerly of the Royal Artillery

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## PREFACE

No one could be more conscious than I am myself of how much this volume of my grandfather's posthumously published book<sup>1</sup> suffers for lack of the skilful editing of my uncle, whose understanding of his father's mind and appreciation of his humour made him the ideal interpreter of his intentions. Colonel Charles Phipps died in 1931 when the third volume was in the press; but, encouraged by the reception of earlier volumes by military critics and historians, he had already determined the composition of this one and had partially revised some 70 pages of the MS. It is with intense pride and pleasure that I have tried to carry on his task. Lacking his wit, I have yet that *pietas* which makes me rejoice to take up in my turn, as a member of the third generation, the publication of my grandfather's work.

The contents of this volume have been enlarged from the form which my uncle suggested in his preface to Volume III by the addition of two chapters on Paris and the army of the Interior, which apparently he had not meant to publish. They repeated a good deal that had been said in Volume I of persons and parties in Paris in the early days of the revolutionary wars, and in spite of drastic cutting some overlapping remains; but the intrinsic interest of these chapters seemed to justify their inclusion, apart from their importance as showing the events preceding the *coup d'état* of Fructidor. They have been placed at the end of the account of the army of Italy because, though chronologically they begin at an earlier period, they lead naturally up to Fructidor.

As my uncle has been at pains to insist, my grandfather's study of the revolutionary armies is limited to their influence as 'Schools of the Marshals', and the first campaign of Bonaparte in Italy had been dealt with so often and in such detail that it was not necessary to cover all that ground again, or to describe

<sup>1</sup> Vol. I. *The Armée du Nord* (1926). Vol. II. *The Armées de la Moselle, du Rhin, de Sambre-et-Meuse, de Rhin-et-Moselle* (1929). Vol. III. *The Armies in the West 1793-1797, the Armies in the South 1792 to March 1796* (1931).



at length strategy and tactics which emanated from the brain of the Commander-in-Chief almost exclusively, giving in this sphere less scope than formerly to the other Generals. Although firm enough, on various occasions in this volume, in rejecting such unjustified pretensions as those of Augereau, my grandfather does not fail to point out Bonaparte's debt to his subordinates. Without the skill and enterprise of the Generals, the courage and marching endurance of the men, his burst over the Apennines could not have been made with such spectacular speed and success.

In this volume there is one great change from the histories of the other armies which have been dealt with. In spite of the official title, the army of Italy of 1796-7 is not an army of the Republic but the army of Bonaparte. The Government is impotent to direct or control its movements, and the independence of Bonaparte is refreshing after the subservience of other contemporary commanders. On the other hand his slight figure dwarfs the stature of the future Marshals. Suddenly promoted over the head of men like Sérurier, who had been a seasoned warrior before Bonaparte was born, and Kellermann and Masséna, who had been commanding divisions and armies all through the revolutionary wars, he inevitably takes the limelight; and in the crowded events of these campaigns there is less room for that interplay of personality amongst the Marshals which was so particularly absorbing in the more leisurely campaigns described in former volumes. Instead we get the influence of Bonaparte on his subordinates. That influence was enormous, but, in regard to the 'Italie' group of Marshals at least, my grandfather thinks that it was the influence of a master, not of a teacher. He influenced their lives but not their minds. Only Masséna, and possibly Suchet, appears to have learnt something more of the art of war from contact with Bonaparte.

Here, too, we see the Marshals less as men than as soldiers, and as men it is the least pleasant sides of their characters which appear. In courage none is deficient—the peculiarities of revolutionary warfare made it impossible for a man to rise high without possessing this quality in a marked degree, and Bonaparte had

a *penchant* not only for tall men but also for those whose horses were shot beneath them or whose clothes were riddled with bullets, leaving rider or wearer intact. But now for the first time we read of that love of plunder and that desire for advancement or credit even at the expense of others, which were two of the disadvantages of Bonaparte's system of reward and praise, a system too often arbitrarily administered. There had been feuds and denunciations in the 'Nord', and confusion and ill feeling enough in all the armies in the early days, when the Terror was present on the frontiers in the shape of the *représentants-en-mission* or of Government spies like Brune. But on the whole men were keener then to avoid promotion than to demand it, and they received very little pay and acquired no plunder. In the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' the rivalry of Soult and Ney was certainly embittered by personal feeling, but in the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' the friendship of Desaix and Saint-Cyr rose above the obvious rivalry and ignored the preference shown by Moreau for Desaix. There is a generosity about Desaix's passion for Glory which makes it a different thing from Masséna's anxiety lest he or his division be forgotten in the competition for honours. For this difference Bonaparte's system is partly responsible, as well as the character of the men concerned.

All the future Marshals, and many of the other Generals, mentioned in this volume, have already appeared in former volumes of my grandfather's work, where their early lives and previous fighting experience are dealt with. I have tried not to refer back to these other volumes more than seemed necessary, but I hope that no explanation has been withheld that would have been helpful. In general arrangement I have followed the model provided by my uncle in Volume III, especially in omitting the references to authorities on each page, except where they seem to be essential. At the beginning of the volume there is a list of the authorities consulted by my grandfather throughout, and at the beginning of each section are the names of those that apply to that section in particular. As my uncle stated in his preface to Volume III, in describing the Italian campaign we enter a period on which the late General Colin is an

acknowledged authority. My grandfather has not included Colin's works in his lists, but some of the more important of them were in his library (now the 'Phipps Bequest' in the Codrington Library at All Souls, Oxford). It will be seen that, as regards the early part of Bonaparte's first campaign in Italy, my grandfather's conclusions do not differ from those of Mr. Spenser Wilkinson, who has written of the period up to the Battle of Lodi in greater tactical detail.<sup>1</sup> In this case, as in all others, I have given in the Lists of Authorities only those works quoted by my grandfather.

I want here to thank my uncle Sir Edmund Phipps for his help and encouragement; Sir Charles Oman for allowing me access to the Codrington Library; and Mr. Algernon Whitaker for his help in identifying references and making up the Lists of Authorities.

The scope of the material left by my grandfather may be found in the preface to Volume I, and I hope it may be possible, if the present volume is well received, to publish at least one further volume. I have not had time yet to examine the mass of MSS., but presumably such a volume would contain an account of the armies of 1798-9, and of the *coup d'état* of Brumaire, which profoundly affected the lives of all the Marshals.

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Little Tew.*

<sup>1</sup> Spenser Wilkinson, *The Rise of General Bonaparte*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1930.



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# I

## THE ADVANCE INTO ITALY

(March to April 1796)

Bonaparte's reception. Berthier's position. Montenotte. The Cosseria affair. Dego to Mondovi. Criticism of the campaign.

### CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

None. Armistice on the Rhine still in force.

ON the 5th October 1795 Bonaparte suppressed the insurrection of the 13th Vendémiaire at Paris. On the 2nd March 1796 he was appointed to the command of the Armée d'Italie. The tendency of so many writers to find something miraculous, or something disgraceful, in every step of Bonaparte's early life has assigned strange reasons for the appointment. It is, for instance, difficult to understand why his marriage with the widow of a General who had been guillotined as a traitor, should be considered as a recommendation for command; unless, indeed, we follow Barras, who represents himself as anxious to get rid of a mistress and Bonaparte as believing that marriage with such a person would be a step to the post he wanted. Though all Barras' allegations against Josephine are false, doubtless he is right in saying that she was in very poor circumstances; she was not going to leave Paris, and therefore the marriage would not have done much to separate her from him. Such affairs move quickly in France. On the 7th February the banns were published, and on the 9th March, a week after the date of Bonaparte's appointment, the wedding took place. Now, on the 7th February there was no idea of relieving Schérer from the command of 'Italie': on the contrary, down to the 28th attempts were being made to get him to continue in it.<sup>1</sup> The fact that Barras was advocating the gift of a command in order to shake off a mistress would be known at once to his colleagues, so easily does scandal spread. Yet Carnot, whose veracity is not to be doubted, says that it was he, and not Barras, that proposed Bonaparte for the command of 'Italie', a statement supported by the fact that it was Carnot who was attacked for preferring that General to some unknown aspirant.

Then too, the Directors, always and instinctively jealous of

<sup>1</sup> Phipps, iii. 276-8.

any successful General, had no wish to keep their saviour by their side, and a command sufficiently tempting to get him away from Paris had to be found for him, just as one had to be found for Augereau after the *coup d'état* of Fructidor in 1797. To most officers the Armée d'Italie had no attractions; it had clung to the sea-coast in a state of misery, and, after its facile conquest of Nice and Savoy, its one real achievement had been the victory of Loano, a victory which had only seemed to demonstrate the impossibility of any further advance. The discouragement into which Schérer fell is proof of this.<sup>1</sup> With Bonaparte it was very different: knowing all about the army and its district, he had from the first longed to see it thrown into the plains of Piedmont, and the difficulties which tied it to the coast did not appal him. Also, he must have had the soldier's dislike of paltry street warfare; and now, as in 1797, he was probably distrustful of the Directory. Anyhow, as he himself says, a young General, twenty-five years old, could not remain for long at the head of the army of Paris. It was as natural, or rather as inevitable, that he should accept the command of the Armée d'Italie, as that the Directory should offer it. And, putting aside all this, when we remember how long Bonaparte's plans for 'Italie' had been under consideration in Paris, whether they had been submitted by the younger Robespierre or by himself in person,<sup>2</sup> it does seem absurd to rummage in the gutter for reasons for giving the execution of these plans to the man that had made them.

As a fighting force, the army which Bonaparte received from Schérer was fine enough, and the new commander sang the praises of the old to the Directory. The troops had been well entered for war; the *amalgame*,<sup>3</sup> now almost completed, had made the whole force more manageable; and by this time the regiments from the Pyrenees had become an integral part of the Armée d'Italie. But, unpaid, unclothed, half-starved, its state was alarming even to Bonaparte, and the best he could say was that, bad as was the situation, it was not desperate. The worst feature was that 'la misère y a autorisé l'indiscipline, et, sans discipline, point de victoire!' This, he trusted, would

<sup>1</sup> Phipps, iii, Chapter XV.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 227-30.

<sup>3</sup> For an explanation of this process see Phipps, i, Introduction, Chapter III; *ibid.* iii, 273-4.

be remedied when the advance should take the army away from the coast.

With the arrival of the new commander and his staff the real 'Bonaparte-group', that of the *Armée d'Italie*, was complete. He himself was twenty-six, young, active, wiry, longing to put into execution the plans he had laid before helpless men.<sup>1</sup> On his personal staff were his three A.D.C.s: Colonel Murat, who had joined him in Paris; Captain Junot, who had never left him since they had come together at Toulon; and Captain Marmont, who had gone from Paris to join the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' and had then been recalled to his side at the Capital. The Chief of the Staff was Berthier, chosen not only for his own merits but also because General Duvigneau, who had held that post in the *Armée de l'Intérieur* under Bonaparte, had refused to follow his General to Italy, no doubt thinking, like Grouchy, that there was nothing to be gained in that field under so young a commander. The three Generals of Division were Augereau, Masséna, and Sérurier; then came General of Brigade Victor, and Joubert, who had just attained the same rank and was fast rising. Next there was Colonel Lannes, who, having lost the command of his regiment in the *amalgame*, was waiting for a vacancy, and Lieut.-Colonel Suchet. In the lower ranks and as yet undistinguished were Captain Bessières and Second-Captain Duroc.<sup>2</sup> All these officers were to be Marshals except General Joubert, who died too young to gain the bâton. They occupied the following positions with regard to Bonaparte. Marmont knew him well and was a believer in his great talents. Masséna he had known both at the siege of Toulon and with the *Armée d'Italie* under Dumerbion, and Masséna now met him cordially. That General, however, did not wear his heart on his sleeve. Victor and Suchet had been with him at the siege of Toulon, where he was on friendly terms at least with Suchet; but if we are to judge by Suchet's conversation now and Victor's behaviour in 1799, neither of them really liked him. Berthier and Sérurier he had probably seen when with the *Armée d'Italie*, when Berthier was Chief of the Staff to Kellermann during that General's command.<sup>3</sup> It will be remembered that Berthier had

<sup>1</sup> Phipps, iii, Chapter XV, 278.

<sup>2</sup> Phipps, iii, for previous careers of all these officers.

<sup>3</sup> For Bonaparte's probable meetings with these future Marshals, see Phipps, iii, Chapters VII and XIII.



only been Bonaparte's second choice, so that he would appear to have held no very high opinion of his abilities. Murat he had only known at Paris, and Murat only accompanied him because he could not get a better appointment. Augereau and Lannes, I presume, had never met Bonaparte, as they were serving with the 'Pyrénées Orientales' until after he had left the Armée d'Italie.<sup>1</sup> It is also probable that he did not know either Bessières, Joubert, or Duroc. The other Generals with the army, who did not become Marshals, were Meynier,<sup>2</sup> who, I think, was not actively employed after 1799; Macquard, who retired in 1797; Laharpe, who was soon killed, and Garnier, who capitulated in Rome in 1799, when Macdonald was dissatisfied with him; I think he disappears after 1809. Cervoni, Dallemagne, Kilmaine, Menard, and Saint-Hilaire we shall meet under the Empire.

The posting of Berthier to the Armée d'Italie had the effect of causing a belief among well-informed persons that he went as a sort of bear-leader to Bonaparte, a belief that it took some time to upset; for, however absurd it may seem to us, it was in reality natural enough. Bonaparte was unknown to the world, and his experience in the Armée d'Italie does not seem to have been realized. Berthier, on the other hand, had the best of reputations, and Generals had been so anxious to get him on their staffs that his merits as an adviser were believed to be high. Bonaparte's success in now wrenching him from Kellermann and the Armée des Alpes was due not only to the favour with which the commander of Vendémiaire was regarded, but also to Berthier's own efforts to return to 'Italie'. Many men in Paris, for instance Clarke at the War Office, knew Berthier's views and his anxiety for a bold offensive; and when this offensive was taken up and the army dashed into Piedmont, it was inevitable that people should say, 'Berthier at last has his way!' It took so long to dissipate this illusion that men are found to believe that Napoleon was mad enough and jealous enough to let Berthier have the command of the *Grande Armée* for a time in 1809, in order that he might show his incapacity.

<sup>1</sup> Bonaparte was removed from 'Italie' in May 1795, while Augereau and Lannes reached that army in October of that year. Phipps, iii, 237 and 256.

<sup>2</sup> Général Jean-Baptiste Meynier (1749-1813). Pajol, i, 52-3. He is often confused with Meunier.

But, jealous as Bonaparte was in many matters, I do not think that he feared, or indeed ever thought of, any rivalry between himself and other Generals. Amused contempt would perhaps better describe his attitude towards any belief in Berthier's talent. On the 22nd June 1796 Bonaparte, then at Bologna, asked Miot de Mérito, the Commissioner: . . . 'whether you believe, like so many people, what I see in the papers of the country, that it is to Berthier that I owe my success, that it is he who directs my plans, and that all I do is to carry out the designs he suggests to me?' 'Not at all,' replied Miot, 'I know him too well to attribute to him the kind of merit which he does not possess. If he had it, he certainly would not yield the glory to you.' 'You are right,' replied Bonaparte in a very animated tone, 'Berthier is not capable of commanding a battalion!' It is to be remembered that Miot had known Berthier long and well, when both were young men at Versailles. Of course, to say he could not command a battalion was an exaggeration, but men fit for command as a rule like to have power, and the sort of wail we shall find Berthier keeping up when he was left in command in Italy in 1798 reminds one of a child that wants its nurse, and is good evidence that the actual command of an army would not have suited his special talents. One must not, however, depreciate Berthier too much, for, had he been left with 'Italie' as Schérer's Chief of the Staff, he probably would not only have urged an offensive on a larger scale but also would have done much to make it practicable. And he may well have been at that time more independent, and more capable of initiative, than when he had been crushed by long years of close intimacy with the master-mind of Napoleon. In the upward path he was to be the admiring companion, and in the descent the more and more bewildered and alarmed follower, as the Emperor marched ever on into the gloomy future, 'with doubtful Sancho trudging at his back'. The pair are inseparable, and, if one regrets the defection of 1814, one hopes, nay believes, that all has been explained and forgiven in the Elysian fields.

As for leaders, Bonaparte had three fine chiefs: Masséna, whose blows were dealt with rare intelligence; Augereau, a stern fighter, with, one always suspects, a good deal of the bully in him; and Sérurier, a straightforward combatant. Of these, Sérurier had applied, on account of his health, to be permitted



to retire on the pension due to his age, his wounds, and the length of his service: he was fifty-three years old and had forty years' service. But the coming of Bonaparte seems to have changed the old General's resolution; according to tradition Sérurier was the first to meet him, and, finding himself well received, resolved to remain with his command.

The most important thing for Bonaparte was his reception by the army. By a most natural illusion it pleased the Emperor in his last years to describe his addresses to the troops on his arrival as being received with loud cheers, and no doubt he had some grounds for this; but at least in some regiments his discourse produced more amusement than enthusiasm. His long hair, with curls 'à l'incroyable', his small and thin body, all were remarked on and laughed over round the bivouac fires; for what confidence could the men have in the promises of a young man whose name they hardly knew? Here let me quote the description given by Miot de Mérito of the General as he appeared at Brescia three months later: 'I saw, amidst a numerous staff, a man below the ordinary height, and extremely thin. His powdered hair, cut in a peculiar manner and squared below his ears, fell on his shoulders. He was dressed in a tight coat buttoned up to the top and ornamented by a small and narrow gold brocade; he wore a tricoloured plume in his hat. At first sight his face did not seem fine to me, but marked features, a quick and inquisitive eye, brusque and animated gestures, revealed an ardent mind, while the large and thoughtful forehead showed a profound thinker. . . . His speech was brief and at this time very incorrect.' Indeed, even His Majesty the Emperor of the French was never quite master of the French language.

The army had been so broken up in detachments over a wide extent of ground that to many officers his past services in Italy must have been unknown. For instance, in later years he represented himself to Suchet as having always taken an interest in him after Toulon; but, if this was true, it was certainly not yet reciprocated. Pelleport says that on the day after Bonaparte had addressed the 18th Regiment, he happened to be with Lieut.-Colonel Suchet, who was commanding one of its battalions, and was astonished at the language he used about General Bonaparte. 'This Corsican', said he, 'has no

reputation beyond what he acquired at the siege of Toulon—that of a good gun-commander; as a general officer he is known only to the Parisians. This intriguer has no support.’ Much of this is explained by the fact (if I am right), that Suchet’s battalion had been in rear when Bonaparte had been most active on the staff of Dumerbion, but it is a delicious instance of the difference between the opinions of the moment and those of later days: I fancy the Duc d’Albufère would have found it hard to believe that he had ever so spoken of His Majesty the Emperor.

Still, whatever his Generals may have thought, they received him civilly enough. Sérurier probably first met him alone, in the satisfactory interview to which I have alluded. On the 29th March, Masséna, writing as if there had been some personal dealings between them, said: ‘I congratulate you with all my heart on the command-in-chief of the Armée d’Italie, which has been given you. You have long known that I do justice to your military talents. I shall so act as to deserve your confidence, as I have won that of all the Generals that have commanded up till now.’ This is polite, but it seems to prove that Marmont is right when he says that Masséna was far from considering Bonaparte his equal as a soldier: why, indeed, should he, when he himself seemed to have so much greater a claim to command the troops he had led so long? It might be seen that the appointment pained him, but he made no show of reluctance, contenting himself with the thought that his obedience was meritorious. Augereau wrote more warmly: ‘I am glad to be under your orders, knowing your *civisme* and your military talents. I shall do all that is possible to carry out your intentions in all the orders that you may give me; count on my zeal, my activity, and my devotion to the public good.’ It will be seen that Augereau clung to the patriotic tags. He had come near to getting the command of the ‘Pyrénées Orientales’, and it is probable that he considered himself superior to all other possible commanders. In later days Masséna told Chaptal, the Minister, that at their first interview with Bonaparte they began with but a small opinion of him, as his slight stature and frail appearance did not affect them in his favour, while his mania for holding the portrait of Joséphine in his hand and showing it to every one (fancy the face of the grim old Sérurier at such a presentation!), together with his extreme youth, made them

believe that his appointment was only the work of an intrigue. But then, putting on his General's hat, said Masséna, he seemed to grow two feet, and, questioning them about their divisions, he spoke with such dignity, such precision and talent, that at the end of the interview they left in the belief that at last they had a real leader. Chaptal's account is in exact agreement with that given by the future General Roguet. Augereau, who had been ready to slight the frail young commander, was struck mute, and retired, saying to Masséna 'that this little b . . . of a General had frightened him, and that he could not understand the ascendancy with which he had felt himself overwhelmed at the first glance.'

The clinging to the portrait of Joséphine is a true touch, for never was a man more deeply in love than Bonaparte at this period. Longing to have the command of the army, he yet cursed the necessity for being separated from his wife. That his affection was never really returned, was, I like to fancy, a misfortune for Napoleon and for France. I do not mean that he would ever have been content as the placid husband, but it is permissible to believe that much of his absorption in war and business came from want of the content produced by a happy home and love returned. The graceful Joséphine, false, intriguing, mendacious, sacrificing everything to her attempts to secure her position, may have more to answer for than even the unscrupulous inventors of accusations against her have imagined.

Impressed as the Generals may have been, as, indeed, were all persons who now came in contact with Bonaparte when he was playing for his heart's stake, still, one cannot but suspect that unconsciously a little of the knowledge acquired in the future affected these records of their first appreciation of him. While believing that they had at last a commander capable of planning the strategy for the army, at first they still thought that the sagacious Berthier would shape the operations and that much would have to be left to them. Berthier was in a different position, for he had come most willingly, and it is very possible that already he preferred his post to that of the command-in-chief. No doubt he looked forward to having to exercise a guiding and restraining hand over his young commander. When he actually came to deal with Bonaparte he must have been as greatly surprised as the 'dry nurse', or second-in-command, of



Wellington was when that General put him aside in 1805.<sup>1</sup> Certainly none of these four men believed, what Marmont might have told them, that they had got the greatest commander the world had ever seen, and the most imperious.

The campaign of 1796 in Italy is so well known and has been the subject of so many works that I need not do more than sketch the operations sufficiently to show the personal fortunes of the group of officers with whom we are concerned. When Bonaparte took over 'Italie' from Schérer on the 27th March, the army was placed as follows: Masséna commanded the *avant-garde*, composed of two divisions, Laharpe and Meynier, which held the coast from Savona to Vado, and the crest of the Apennines from San Giacomo to Melogno, with outposts at Cadibona and Monte Negino. On his left was Augereau, with his head-quarters at Pietra and his division distributed inland as far as Calizzano and down the coast to Alassio. Sérurier, with head-quarters at Ormea, held the upper Tanaro valley, Macquard held the Colle di Tenda, and Garnier closed the line on the extreme left north of Nice. The extreme right of the army had just been pushed out along the coast to Voltri, but this was not done on Bonaparte's initiative,<sup>2</sup> although he took advantage of the movement of the enemy which it provoked. The other future Marshals were distributed as follows: General Joubert had a brigade in Meynier's division, under Masséna. General Victor had a brigade in the division of Augereau, where Lieut.-Colonel Suchet had a battalion of the 69th Regiment in Banel's brigade.<sup>3</sup> Colonel Lannes, not having any fixed command, was at the head of the grenadiers of the 70th and 79th Regiments, in Laharpe's division. Captain Bessières' regiment, the 22nd Chasseurs, was probably at Loano, where it had been brought up with the rest of the cavalry; and Captain Duroc of the artillery seems to have been with the pontoon train, if that yet existed. He soon became A.D.C. to General Lespinasse, commanding the artillery of the army. Colonel Murat and Lieut.-Colonels Marmont and Junot, all three A.D.C.s to Bonaparte, were naturally with that General except when sent on missions.

<sup>1</sup> General Stewart, in the Copenhagen expedition. See *Croker Papers*, i. 343.

<sup>2</sup> Phipps, iii. 276-7.

<sup>3</sup> The 69th became later the 18th Regiment. Krebs-Moris, *Alpes* ii., 388, note 2.

Nominally Bonaparte had available 63,109 men present under arms, but of these 16,481 were in the garrisons, so that 46,628 men remained as a fighting force. From these we must take the Coast Divisions (Macquard and Garnier), 6,236 men, which leaves some 40,000 odd. Of these 35,375 were infantry, 3,354 cavalry, and 1,791 artillery, engineers, and *gendarmes*. The distribution of these troops, with a slight difference in the figures, was as follows: Masséna 18,914; Augereau 11,835; and Sérurier 9,771. The artillery first used consisted of no more than twenty-four mountain guns.<sup>1</sup> In front of 'Italie' lay the combined army of the enemy, the Austrians on the left, under Beaulieu, withdrawn into Lombardy, having from 25,000 to 30,000 men; and the Piedmontese on the right, under Colli, round Mondovi and Ceva, having from 20,000 to 25,000. Provera had an auxiliary Austrian force in the centre round Dego. Bonaparte determined to throw his right (Masséna), and his centre (Augereau), between the Austrians and the Piedmontese, whilst his left (Sérurier), and the Coast Divisions, kept the enemy in front of them quiet. Bonaparte, who had been at Albenga from the 5th April, was joined there about the 8th by Marmont, who had been making an inspection of the troops and their positions. Alarmed by reports of a movement of the Austrians against his right, the division of Laharpe, he sent Marmont next day with orders for the troops at Voltri to draw back down the coast for Savona if they were attacked in force. Marmont found Cervoni's brigade, with which was Lannes, round Voltri engaged with Beaulieu, who had attacked with a force which turned out to be his left column. After some fighting the Austrians entered Voltri on the 10th April, while the French drew back before him according to the order brought by Marmont. Beaulieu had intended to cut off Laharpe from Savona, by sending his right column, under d'Argenteau, through the hills of Montenotte and Monte Negino, while an English squadron under Nelson, which anchored off Voltri on the night of the 10th April, was to give support along the coast. Now, puzzled by the withdrawal of the French and anxious

<sup>1</sup> Krebs-Moris, *Alpes*, ii, note 1, 368. Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 13-14, 428-9, differs, but does not give cavalry which was ordered up on the 14th April. *Corr. Nap.* i, No. 164; Marmont, i. 145, makes 28,820 infantry, which probably was the real number for the field; and I follow him for the guns.



about d'Argenteau, who did not appear, Beaulieu, after an interview with Nelson, went back on the 11th April towards Novi and Acqui, ready to concentrate against a counter-attack. Meantime, amongst the hills above, d'Argenteau, having forced the French from Montenotte, had been checked at Monte Negino, and, disregarding the advice of the wounded General Rukavina,<sup>1</sup> either to assault in force at once or to draw back to Dego and fortify himself there, he halted for guns. Laharpe, hearing of this attack, went up to Monte Negino with Marmont.

Bonaparte, who, meeting Augereau on the way, had come up from Albenga to Savona on the 9th April, now went up to the Madonna di Savona on the hills above the town, and, meeting Laharpe and presumably Marmont also, brought them back to Savona, whither he had called Masséna. Here also Berthier, with, I assume, Junot and Murat, joined him. Bonaparte explained to Masséna and Laharpe his plan for taking advantage of the great extension of the enemy's line made by Beaulieu's movement. Beaulieu was to be neglected for the moment, and d'Argenteau was to be attacked by the 10,000 or 11,000 troops lying between Savona, Cadibona, and Vado, while Augereau, with about the same force from round Finale and Loano, was to march in support by the Colle di San Giacomo and the Eastern Bormida. Berthier wrote out the necessary orders, which, with subsequent detachments, entailed the breaking up of the divisions. Meynier's division was soon dissolved, and, for instance, the 69th, the future 18th Regiment, really belonging to Banel's brigade in Augereau's division, actually fought under Laharpe, Augereau, and Masséna. While it is easy to follow the Generals of Division, there is some uncertainty as to the exact positions of General of Brigade Victor, Colonel Lannes, and Lieut.-Colonel Suchet, although I assume that the last was with the 69th Regiment. Early on the 12th April Masséna and Laharpe with their forces attacked and routed d'Argenteau, whose troops fled northwards. Colonel and A.D.C. Murat had been with a regiment, the 8th Light, which had worked on the left. Bonaparte with, I presume, the rest of his staff, Berthier, Marmont, and Junot, had watched the action from sunrise on the ridge of Casa Bianca, east of Altare. He now issued orders for a fresh movement. Believing the Austrians on his right to

<sup>1</sup> Phipps, iii, 265.

be out of the field for the moment, he intended to throw his weight on the left of the Piedmontese and cut them off from their allies. Laharpe with his division and Masséna with a regiment were to march on Dego. Menard with another regiment was sent west on Biestro to ensure the march of the troops from the south down the Eastern Bormida for Carcare.<sup>1</sup> These latter bodies came late, Joubert leading, and halted at San Donato, between Carcare and Cairo. Augereau reached Carcare, and Dommartin was far in rear at Montefreddo. Bonaparte, having lunched at Altare, came on to Carcare. Judged by the usual standards the army had been very unready to advance, as is shown by the fact that in one of Augereau's regiments, the 69th, 1,000 men had been brought up without arms, and these were now supplied with muskets picked up on the field of Montenotte.

On the 13th, while Masséna and Laharpe on the east were to keep off the Austrians, the rest of the striking force was turned westward on the Piedmontese. Augereau, probably leaving at Carcare General Victor with the 1,000 men now being armed, moved due west on Millesimo with two regiments (in one of which Lieut.-Colonel Suchet served), and the brigades of Joubert and Menard belonging to Masséna, but placed under him; he also had some 400 cavalry. Bonaparte did not expect resistance at Millesimo, but intended to attack that day at Monte Zemolo, farther west, clearing the way for Sérurier, who was to come down the Tanaro and to attack Ceva when Bonaparte was master of the heights above and to the east. Contrary to the belief of Bonaparte, Colli, who had been ignorant of Beaulieu's enterprise, and had not known till now of d'Argenteau's defeat, stood to defend the heights on the east of Millesimo. Bonaparte, therefore, sent on Augereau to attack whilst Dommartin was ordered from the south on Cosseria. Augereau with his own men and the brigades attached to him cleared the gorges of Millesimo, driving Provera, who commanded the Piedmontese detachment of some 910 men, on to the hill of Cosseria. Here the Piedmontese took refuge in the ruins of the old *château*, which offered a strong position, for, though it was in ruins, it stood high, with a *glacis* steep and clear above but broken by thickets

<sup>1</sup> His orders (*Corr. Nap.* i, Nos. 137-8), obviously should be dated from Altare and not from Carcare, whither he says in No. 138 that he will go. See also Krebs-Moris, ii. 388, note 4.

below. Augereau waited till Bonaparte came up, and after some hesitation gave orders for an assault, first summoning the enemy, who replied, 'Know that you have to do with the grenadiers of Piedmont, who never surrender', and cut short the matter by a roll of drums.<sup>1</sup> Then Banel with the 69th Regiment assaulted, but was beaten back. About 11 a.m. Bonaparte again summoned the place, but the only offer he made was to receive a complete surrender, which was refused. Then, hearing a heavy fire on his left, he went off in that direction, and it seems strange that he did not return but went back instead to Carcare.

The Piedmontese still negotiated with Augereau, asking for a free passage: they knew that Colli was bringing up troops to the north of them, and believed naturally enough that every endeavour would be made to relieve them. Provera asked to see Bonaparte himself, but, as we have seen, Bonaparte was away and, as the garrison would not make the unconditional surrender on which the commander insisted, Augereau, having lost three hours in the negotiations, at about 2 p.m. prepared another assault. While the rest of the French troops kept off the enemy who were collecting in the open and threatening to relieve Provera, three columns were led by Joubert, Banel, who had refused the command of the reserve, and the Adjutant-General Quesnel, whose command was formed, I take it, by the regiment in which Lieut.-Colonel Suchet served. As the columns advanced the Austrians swept the ground with their fire and rolled down rocks, and Joubert in the centre halted his men for a moment to take breath. Seeing this, the flanking bodies also halted, and then suffered such heavy losses that they fell back. Joubert moved on and reached the wall: 'Nothing more terrible', he wrote afterwards, 'could be imagined than the assault, where I was wounded in passing through a loophole: my carabiniers held me up in the air, with one hand I grasped the wall, I parried the stones with my sabre, and my whole body was the target for two entrenchments dominating the position ten paces off.' He warded off two stones and received no more than a gun-shot in his coat, but at last he was knocked down by a stone, and his men fell back carrying him off. The assault was evidently

<sup>1</sup> Bouvier, 270-2; Trolard, *Montenotte*, 41, giving his authorities, says the garrison was Austrian, but really it was composed of Piedmontese and Croats, the latter a part of the Austrian auxiliary force, see Bouvier, 270, note 3.



hopeless, and Augereau abandoned it. The troops retook their first positions by 5 p.m., and Provera offered a suspension of hostilities, which enabled the French to carry off their wounded. Colli meantime had done nothing but threaten an attack which he did not venture to make, and next day, the 14th April, Provera, without ammunition, food, or even water, surrendered on conditions that he would probably have accepted sooner, the officers retaining their swords and returning home till exchanged, and the mass of the men becoming prisoners of war. The relieving force of the enemy was then driven off.

Bonaparte, strangely obstinate on the point of a complete surrender by the small garrison, was annoyed by the slight concessions made by Augereau in the terms granted; for instance the permission given to the Piedmontese officers to return home on *parole* until exchanged. Consequently he received these officers roughly enough at first. He had lost valuable time for so small a gain, and his troops had suffered severely: Banel and Quesnel, with Colonel Riondet (or Riondeau) of Suchet's regiment, had been killed (Suchet taking command temporarily), and probably the casualties came to 1,000 officers and men killed and wounded. Joubert's brigade had been so shattered that it had had to be relieved. All this waste of lives and of time had been incurred to capture some 900 men who were ready to surrender if allowed to go home on *parole*, or who might so easily have been left blocked. This affair of Cosseria, indeed, strikes one as unlike Bonaparte, who for once yielded the gains that a rapid pursuit of the enemy might have given him, in order to capture a handful of men. Events on the right were also to show that he had underestimated the resistance of the Austrians. On the night of the 12th April Masséna, coming down the Eastern Bormida, had reached the hills above and on the east of Cairo, but, as he had only 1,200 men, he halted. At night he received orders to attack Dego, farther down the river. On the 13th Laharpe's division came up,<sup>1</sup> but, as it was tired, Masséna, who had already had two interviews with Bonaparte, reconnoitred Dego with his own division only and found the place strongly held. On the 14th Masséna prepared to attack with both his divisions, and Bonaparte, coming up from Millesimo,

<sup>1</sup> Laharpe is often said to have marched for Sassello, but see his route in Krebs-Moris, ii. 394, note 6, and Bouvier, 295, note 8.



approved, and made only one change in the dispositions: with an artilleryman's judgement he altered the position of two guns. His A.D.C. Captain Marmont accompanied the left column of Laharpe's division, which was to cross the Bormida. Colonel Lannes was still with Laharpe, and Captain Bessières may have been too, as part of his regiment, the 22nd Chasseurs, was there. The place was soon taken, for the French had from 8,000 to 9,000 men against from 3,000 to 4,000 of the Allies. The enemy, closely pursued, was routed with great loss of prisoners, and of some 19 guns. Bonaparte then left Masséna to hold Dego and sent Laharpe back to Cairo to be ready to support Augereau on the west.

So far, except for the loss of a day at Cosseria, the operations of Bonaparte had been successful, and the final result, when he reached the plains, was so good that critics have perhaps been rather blind to the chances of failure. Beaulieu did not take advantage of the possibilities open to him, either to join with Colli and the Piedmontese, or else to oppose, or even crush, Masséna and Laharpe on Bonaparte's right. That right, indeed, was so vulnerable that we shall find an accidental stroke at it halting the advance and making Bonaparte direct every available man there. Possibly he already had much of that intuition, which in later days was said to have characterized him, as to what the Austrians would or would not do, but the advance across the hills was by no means the triumphal march it is often said to have been; rather was it a rush of columns of starving men, for whom the only safety lay in advancing, and to whom the least check was a serious danger. It cannot be said that there was no reason for the enemy to calculate on a return stroke by Bonaparte, for I have already given an estimate of his probable daring by one of their leaders,<sup>1</sup> and the advice of Rukavina to d'Argenteau, to crush the French at Monte Negino or to prepare for a counter-blow at Dego, shows that the possibilities of the situation were known to some at least of the Generals of the Allies. Anyhow, chance was to show what might have been done by calculation on the part of the enemy. What they wanted was time, and that they could have won.

Once in possession of Dego, and having seen the enemy flying far, the French felt secure enough. Masséna placed his men

<sup>1</sup> Phipps, iii. 233-4.

and then rode back to Cairo to meet Bonaparte and receive fresh instructions. General Meynier, whom Koch describes as too much crippled by rheumatism to control his men, must have been away at this time,<sup>1</sup> so that all the work fell on General of Brigade Lasalcette. What control could he have over a crowd of starving men? The troops had received no supplies, and, well accustomed to provide for themselves, they dispersed in order to plunder the neighbouring villages. Masséna had ordered that the guns captured should be brought down into the plain, but they were left massed on the road. Suddenly on the next morning, the 15th April, a body of Austrians appeared and at once attacked the amazed French, who had not enough men on the spot to make much resistance. Word was sent to Masséna, who came up from Cairo at a gallop, only to meet a broken and flying mass of his men which swept him away with it; all he could do was to anticipate the rout by sending on his staff to the plateau on which he had formed for the attack of the 14th. This succeeded: the men began rallying on their regiments, those who had been plundering far off returned to the ranks, and, half-laughing at their own discomfiture, half-furious for revenge, the division found it had to begin again the work it had done on the previous day, but this time not confronted by troops demoralized by defeat.

There is a seamy side to everything, and here Ségur asserts that the unprepared state of the division was partly due to Masséna, who, as his share of the prey, had seized on a young woman, the wife or mistress of an Austrian, and had shut himself up with her in one of the houses of the village, instead of looking after his men. Almost caught by the Austrians in their attack, he had fled half-naked and had escaped the hands outstretched to grasp him by throwing himself into a ravine with an Adjutant-General, Roguet. Then, trying to rally his men, he was met with bitter jeers, till Bonaparte came up. Trolard is inclined to believe this, suggesting that Bonaparte may have told Joséphine, and that lady may have told Ségur. Also is it not true that Roguet was there? He certainly was and has given us his account, in which he says not a word to support this story, but represents his General as trying to rally his men.

<sup>1</sup> Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 34; but see *Corr. Nap.* i, Nos. 142, 146, which indicate that Meynier was sent away on the 13th April.

'In such confusion his voice is hardly heard, his exhortations remain powerless.' Later, 'Masséna, having abused us, angrily points out Dego and gives the signal for a fresh attack.' It is only too true that love for women was one of Masséna's faults, but one can hardly fancy Roguet omitting what he would consider a good story, for he tells us how once he pitched a tent wherein his Colonel, Dupuis, meant to enjoy himself with a lady, and so pitched it that the pickets drew and the tent came down, with lamentable results. As for Joséphine, that graceful lady is not an authority to be trusted. Marbot has a confused story attributing the absence of Masséna to a plan for surprising an enemy post. What seems certain is that Masséna was at Cairo, not at Dego. It is curious that Gachot, an historian of Masséna, should not have a word to say on this subject.<sup>1</sup> Ségur speaks of Masséna's throwing himself into a ravine to escape the enemy, and this may explain Marbot's story that the General brought off one battalion when almost surrounded, showing the men how to escape down the slope by seating himself on it and then gliding down as he had done in the smuggling expeditions of his youth. Marbot asserts that he was told this by Roguet and other Generals, and that he heard Augereau rally Masséna about it before the Emperor, so the story may be true.

The enemy had delivered this astonishing blow by the merest chance. Beaulieu had ordered Colonel Wukassowich to march from Voltri to Sassello, where he arrived on the 13th April and was joined by two other battalions, which made him 3,500 strong. Then on that night d'Argenteau, alarmed by the reconnaissance made during the day by Masséna, called Wukassowich up to Dego. Wukassowich reached Giusvalla on the 14th and at 6 a.m. received d'Argenteau's dispatch; he could hear the firing as Masséna attacked Dego. But the dispatch, which directed him to march to-morrow morning, was itself dated an hour after midnight of the 14th. Wukassowich therefore thought that he would be adhering to his orders if he arrived at Dego on the 15th, which accordingly he did.<sup>2</sup> Now, like a brave and sensible man, he determined to take advantage of the prize

<sup>1</sup> See Ségur, i. 204-6; Trolard, 43-4; Roguet, i. 230-1; Marbot, 9-11; Bouvier, 307, note 3; Gachot, 115.

<sup>2</sup> For details of his march see Krebs-Moris, ii. 400, note 3. I think this shows that Laharpe could not have moved by Sassello. See *ante*, p. 18, note 1.



which Fortune had given him; he manned the entrenchments and, having no artillery, put detachments of his infantry to work the guns he had retaken. He also sent back for reinforcements, but d'Argenteau, depressed by the defeat at Dego on the 14th, chose to assume that the Sassello column also had been swept away. He had halted two fresh battalions sent up by Beaulieu to reinforce Wukassowich and had retired to cover Alessandria and Tortona. Had he been within reach, with all the troops he could have laid hands on, the result of the day might have been different and the French army might have been halted in the hills. Bonaparte, whose head-quarters were at Carcare, now ordered up Laharpe (who was to have gone westward for Salicetto in order to support Augereau, but who had not left Cairo), with Menard and the 8th Light, and Victor from Carcare. Other troops, with whom was Suchet, were diverted from the west. The Austrians fought well and with vigour, and when one French column under General Caussel was beaten off they came out of their entrenchments and followed it up till Victor covered the retreat. Bonaparte himself arrived with his staff (not, I think, including Marmont<sup>1</sup>), and made what show he could with his Guides<sup>2</sup> and four squadrons of cavalry which he had brought with him. Colonel Lannes was, I presume, fighting under Laharpe.<sup>3</sup> At last, nearly surrounded and without hope of being reinforced, Wukassowich evacuated the place and retired, losing heavily but carrying off 200 prisoners. The cavalry pursued, and Colonel and A.D.C. Murat was mentioned by Bonaparte as having much contributed to the success of the day.

Wukassowich's brilliant attack on Dego caused a belief that more of the enemy were near, and Bonaparte for a time thought that Beaulieu himself would appear at this point, but there was no chance of that. Beaulieu had left Voltri in the afternoon of the 11th April, but a wheel of his carriage broke and so detained him that it was not till the 12th that he reached Novi. There he stayed to give orders for the concentration of his army on Acqui,

<sup>1</sup> He does not speak of it as a spectator, see Marmont, i. 160.

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of the subject of Guides, see p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> Napoleon at Saint Helena believed it was this day that he had remarked Lannes (*Corr. Nap.* xxix. 88), but it was at the first attack, see *Corr. Nap.* i. 151. Trolard, *Montenotte*, 43, suggests that Adjutant-General Lanusse was mistaken for Lannes.



whither he went himself on the night of the 14th. At Acqui he met d'Argenteau and heard of the defeat at Dego. Far from flying to the assistance of the Piedmontese or supporting his own left, he was cowed by the disasters suffered by his army, and, dreading that Acqui would be attacked before he could collect his troops there, he urged Colli to come to his rescue. This was playing Bonaparte's game, and one wonders what would have happened to that commander had he been opposed to a more energetic adversary. Beaulieu was seventy-one years old, but he had formerly been resolute enough: in one of his earlier combats against the insurgents in Brabant, when his only son was killed he had exclaimed: 'My friends, this is not the time to weep for him, we must conquer.' We have seen him in 1794 striking hard at the French in the north; but the old Walloon was no match for the young General of 'Italie'.<sup>1</sup>

Farther west in the meantime Bonaparte's left had come into line, and, by his orders, Sérurier with some 6,000 men had come down the Tanaro, a brigade on each bank, and placed his head-quarters at Bagnasco; while Rusca, with 2,000 men, moving along the crest of the hills on his right, between the Tanaro and the Western Bormida, took the redoubt of San Giovanni di Murialdo and linked with Joubert, who formed Augereau's left. Sérurier received the thanks of the Directory for the sagacity of his operations, which was not less than they had expected from his zeal, his talents, and his love for the Republic. The General replied, wishing that his physical powers might permit him to see the end of this great quarrel: 'Le général-en-chef Bonaparte paraît en avoir saisi le vrai moyen.' Satisfied now that no great attack would be made on his right at Dego, Bonaparte threw all his weight to the left on the unfortunate Piedmontese under Colli. On the 16th April Augereau, supported by Sérurier, reconnoitred the position held by Colli round Ceva, but the French were beaten off. Bonaparte then changed his head-quarters from Carcare to Millesimo and established a new line of communication by Bardinetto to Loano, a considerable distance to the west of the original line from Savona. Laharpe, under whom was, I presume, Colonel Lannes, was ordered to Dego, and Masséna, moving north-west to

<sup>1</sup> General Baron de Beaulieu (1725-97), *Biog. des Cont.* i. 292; Michaud, iii, 634. See Phipps, ii. 147-9, 160-2.

Mombarcaro, north of Ceva, was to join Dommartin's brigade there and to turn the entrenched camp from the north, while Augereau, supported by Sérurier, attacked from in front and on the south. Colli, however, slipped away to the west across the Corsaglia, which joins the Tanaro below and to the north-west of Ceva. Here he took up a strong position, his left on the Tanaro, his front protected by the deep-cut torrent of the Corsaglia; the bridges over both rivers had been cut, and his right rested on the mountains. He was gaining time, but his officers did not all realize the importance of this. On the 17th April, while Augereau entered the entrenched camp, Sérurier approached Ceva. Here the enemy still held the fort, and the governor rightly refused to surrender, but most unwisely promised not to fire on the French in the town if they did not attack him. Of course he ought to have done his best to make the town untenable by the French and thus gain hours valuable to Colli.

Bonaparte, now placing his head-quarters at Salicetto, went over the ground with his Generals and ordered an attack on Colli's position. On the 19th April Augereau attempted to pass the wide and deep Tanaro, but, swollen as it was by the melting snow, it was unfordable, and though Joubert succeeded in swimming across and escaping the fire of the enemy, the men would not follow, and the attempt had to be abandoned. Bonaparte was informed and would appear to have spent some time here, in order to see if there were any chance of success. On the left Sérurier got across the Corsaglia by means of a bridge which the enemy had left untouched, apparently in order to allow his own posts to retreat from the right bank. Sérurier took the village of San Michele, but he could not debouch on the heights above, for his men, like those of Masséna at Dego, having once got into the village had dispersed to plunder. Then Colli, being now relieved from anxiety about Augereau, came up from the left about 2 p.m., rallied his men, and forced Sérurier back over the Corsaglia. The situation was now most serious, and when Masséna, getting across the Tanaro by the Ceva bridge, had arrived, Bonaparte called his Generals into consultation. The Promised Land was in full view: from the heights of Monte Zemolo the army had gazed on the rich plains of Piedmont, through which the Po, the Tanaro, and a host of other rivers wandered, while above towered the snow-clad mountains.

'Annibal a forcé les Alpes,' had exclaimed Bonaparte, 'nous, nous les avons tournés!' But in front lay the Piedmontese, no longer a force thrown back from post to post but one before which the French army had just recoiled, and from what cause? Its own indiscipline! We have seen how at Dego this indiscipline invited a dangerous defeat. On that occasion the gun-horses and supply-mules of the enemy, abandoned by the Austrians in their flight, had been seized by the French troops and appropriated by them for themselves, an Adjutant-General being the first to get at the gun-teams. To recover the animals Bonaparte had had to offer a *louis* a head. Now, at San Michele, the men had dispersed in the very presence of the enemy. What, indeed, could be done to prevent plundering, when the men cried: 'If you don't want us to pillage—well, feed us, clothe us, pay us.' Orders were given to the Generals to bring all plunderers before courts-martial and have them condemned to death. The sentences were to be carried out in the presence of the troops; and the leaders of corps and parties were declared responsible for the acts of their men. But the real cure was to carry the army forward into the plains, although Bonaparte was anxious about the safety of his rear, which was exposed to an attack by the Austrians.

The result of the deliberations of the assembled Generals was a decision that an immediate attack should be made on Colli: Augereau was to try again to turn the left of the enemy and Masséna was to take the place of Sérurier, who was to throw himself on the right of the position. But the morning of the 22nd April showed the enemy in full retreat and moving still westward on Mondovi, for Colli had been alarmed lest Augereau's movement should cut him off from Cherasco. Bonaparte at once launched his army in pursuit. Sérurier led, and gave the enemy small time to resist. Captain Marmont had been ordered by Bonaparte to follow this division, and his description of the pursuit explains why Sérurier was so much valued, especially in these times when the leaders had to adventure their own persons. 'To form his men in three columns, put himself at the head of the central one, throw out a cloud of skirmishers, and march at the double, sword in hand, ten paces in front of his column: that is what he did. A fine spectacle, that of an old General, resolute and decided, whose vigour was revived by the presence of the



enemy. I accompanied him in this attack, the success of which was complete. The energetic actions of a worthy man have an overpowering authority which nothing can resist. Placed near him in this perilous moment, my only occupation was to admire him.<sup>1</sup> Alas, that no such spectacle can be seen in our days! While Sérurier was parleying with the garrison of Mondovi, one of his brigadiers, Fiorella (in Dommartin's brigade), took advantage of the cessation of fire to get possession of the enemy's stronghold at the Brichetto, much as the bridges of Vienna were to be won in 1809. Marmont turned the captured guns on the town, the garrison of which surrendered with improper haste. Now was the first time that the French cavalry, which had been gradually brought up, was used in any strength, with results which influenced the fortunes of Murat. The two cavalry leaders, Stengel and Beaumont, were following Sérurier, having crossed the Corsaglia with four regiments by a ford below Lesegno. Stengel, whom we have already seen at Valmy,<sup>2</sup> had the chief command. He was a good officer, and Napoleon at Saint Helena, with the feeling of gratitude which a commanding officer always bears towards a man who has done his work well, recalls how in entering Lesegno himself he found that Stengel had done everything required; the defiles and fords had been reconnoitred, guides had been secured, the appropriate inhabitants questioned, spies sent out, the mails seized: in a word all had been done that could be expected from a good cavalry officer leading an army. Now, riding forward with some dragoons, Stengel had just crossed a ford on the Ellero river when he was charged skilfully by two squadrons of the Piedmontese horse, who overthrew his men and then at once withdrew amid the applause of the infantry in rear. In the engagement Stengel received several sabre-cuts and had his arm broken by a pistol-shot. He was left lying on the ground until Murat brought up a Dragoon regiment across the Ellero and bore him off. This action brought credit to Murat at the moment and later on assisted his rise, but Stengel died on the 28th April; he was short-sighted and probably had not seen the foe so near. His name was one of the last that Napoleon uttered on his death-bed.

After the battle of Mondovi on the 21st April the army was safe in the plains, and triumphant; pillage and the consequent in-

<sup>1</sup> Marmont, i. 162.

<sup>2</sup> Phipps, ii. 21, 24.



discipline were stopped as far as possible, and the cavalry was distributed amongst the divisions. Captain Bessières's regiment, the 22nd Chasseurs, was ordered to remain with Sérurier, so it may have been with him at Mondovi. The army then followed Colli, who was rapidly retreating and proposing an armistice the while, in reply to which request Bonaparte, without slackening the pace, sent Murat to Fossano on the 24th April. Meanwhile Laharpe was called up, and with him, I presume, were Lannes, Victor, Suchet's battalion, and the so-called Coast or Reserve Divisions. The conduct of Colonel Lannes, who, as I have said, was with Laharpe, earned the approval of Bonaparte. Wishing to give him a definite appointment, the Commander-in-Chief that evening posted him temporarily to the command of the 69th Regiment, which had lost its Colonel in the attack on Cosseria. Junot, however, in writing the order, by mistake put the 39th instead of the 69th, and this mistake was repeated in Bonaparte's report to the Directory. The 39th was in Augereau's division and that General, liking Lannes as we have seen, had nevertheless to represent that another Colonel, Pourailly, was *en suite* with that regiment and therefore had a better claim than Lannes. Bonaparte accordingly rectified the error, and Lannes nominally became the Colonel of the 69th Regiment (in which Lieut.-Colonel Suchet served), but he did not join it. He probably remained with Laharpe in command of some grenadier companies, and on the 5th May he was given command of three battalions of grenadiers, part of the *avant-garde* under Dallemagne.

Once Bonaparte was out of the hills and had reached Fossano and Cherasco, on the 25th April, he prepared to reopen his communications with the Armée des Alpes, which he hoped had 6,000 men ready either to be placed at his disposal or themselves to enter the plains by Château-Dauphin. As Hamley remarks, there were several possibilities in this part of the field. The Piedmontese might have left a screen before Kellermann and, after withdrawing the rest of their troops from that part, might have thrown them, in combination with the Austrians, on Bonaparte. It was, says Hamley, to guard against such a contingency that Bonaparte on the 25th April, from Fossano, pressed the commander of the right of Kellermann's army to issue from the Alps towards him.<sup>1</sup> Had the Piedmontese done this, however,

<sup>1</sup> Hamley, *Operations*, 145, and Jomini, *Rev.* viii. 100, but I do not know

not only would they still have been inferior in strength to Bonaparte, 'but the distance from Mount Cenis to Turin is so short that Kellermann, unless strongly opposed, might reach it in a single march and enclose their armies while he seized their Capital'. Doubtless it was the possibility of this stroke which kept the enemy in his front quiet, so that he did give support to the brilliant movements amongst the Apennines. He was weaker, I think, than Hamley assumes, and as for any advance, the Directory themselves wrote to Bonaparte on the 25th April: 'Orders will be given to the Armée des Alpes to second you, but unfortunately it is in fearful penury and not strong.' However, on the 28th April at Cherasco an armistice with the Piedmontese was signed, which put the strong places of the country into the possession of the French.

It was now the time for rewards, and the commander's staff was not forgotten. On the 24th April Captain Junot, with Joseph Bonaparte, had been sent from Carru<sup>1</sup> to bear to Paris twenty-one colours taken at Montenotte, Millesimo, Dego, and Mondovi. Junot carried also a bitter complaint of a deficiency that had, so it was declared, caused the loss of Stengel—the absence of light artillery. While Junot went by Nice, reaching Paris in 120 hours, Murat was sent to Paris on the 28th from Cherasco with the terms of the armistice, travelling straight through Piedmont, so that he arrived before Junot.<sup>2</sup> Both the officers thus dispatched had provisional rank only, Murat being Colonel and Junot Captain on those terms, but, as they wore the badges of these grades, and as there was every wish to gratify their chief, they both received higher promotion, so that Murat became General of Brigade on the 10th May and Junot was made Colonel. Berthier had not been overlooked, and on the 22nd April, after Mondovi, Bonaparte wrote to the Directory of the great services rendered by that officer, whose talents equalled his activity, patriotism, and courage. To be Chief of the Staff to Bonaparte had its disadvantages, and doubtless Berthier experienced bad times when a storm of

their authority. On the 26th April Bonaparte says he is marching to open the posts of the Armée des Alpes; and on the 29th he writes to Kellermann for 6,000 men. *Corr. Nap.* i, No. 233, 271.

<sup>1</sup> On the road from Mondovi to Cherasco.

<sup>2</sup> *Corr. Nap.* i, No. 257; Marmont, i. 165. This explains the complaint against Thiers, *Rev.* iii. 403, in Du Casse, *Joseph Bonaparte*, i. 61, note 1.

wrath fell on him, but he had the sense to see the bright side, and not long after this, when after an angry scene with Bonaparte at Milan he received the condolences of a friend, the future Baron Dennaié, he replied: 'You are right, but remember that one day it will be fine to have been the second of this man.' And at Cherasco, where the Piedmontese officers remarked that he was very intelligent and well-informed, Berthier spoke to them of his General, 'avec éloge, mais point en courtisan'. Hustled as he and his office must have been by the constant changes of quarters, still the work was well done, though one is rather amused at fancying his feelings at finding his plans so far exceeded. Bonaparte was not prevented by any jealousy from doing him justice, and on the 6th May he told the Directory that since the beginning of the campaign Berthier 'has always passed the day with me on the field and the night in his office at his desk; it is impossible to unite more activity, goodwill, courage, and knowledge. I have justly allotted to him half the flattering and honourable expressions which you have used to me in your letters.' Indeed it must always be remembered that Berthier was no mere desk-clerk, but did his full work on the field.

As for Captain Marmont, young, confident in the future, and absorbed in the interest of the scenes he was witnessing, he did not envy the fortunes of his comrades away in Paris. He had had one extraordinary escape with General Joubert, who was destined to fall on another field. Both were reconnoitring Cherasco on horseback, each with one orderly, when a round of case fired from the town killed both the orderlies and their horses, but sang harmlessly round the two officers. Joubert, it will have been seen, was fast rising, and was so much in favour with Bonaparte that the commander apologized for not bringing him to Dego: 'I fancy that you will reproach us bitterly for not having called you up, but you were too far on the left. To-morrow you shall have the advance-guard.' 'Voilà ce qui s'appelle un dédommagement', remarks the civilian Sainte-Beuve. Struck by a spent ball at Mondovi, Joubert had accompanied Masséna into Alessandria before the surrender of that place had been arranged, and they became uneasy at finding themselves alone amongst the enemy, but ended by having the gayest of dinners with their late foes. Joubert was astonished at the number of orders worn by one



Piedmontese officer; he himself was not to live to see his comrades covered with such things. Victor and Suchet had been out of all the last fighting: indeed Suchet's regiment never fired a shot after Cosseria until Lodi, where its grenadiers alone were present. Captain Bessières no doubt had been engaged with the 22nd Chasseurs; and the pontoon-train, in which Captain Duroc served under Andréossi, was now in use.

In recounting these operations I have gone into more detail than was actually necessary to my plan for placing each of the group with which we are concerned, because I venture to think that a close study of this part of the campaign does not give one the same idea of it as is obtained from most writers. They make Bonaparte almost necessarily triumphant; but the checks he received, and their causes, show the peril of the task he undertook and go far to justify Schérer's unwillingness to advance. As I have said, a mass of starving men in rags had to be taken across the mountains, and any halt in their progress might have been fatal. The enemy had expected the French to attack, but considered that so long as the two allied armies were concentrated, the Austrians at Acqui and the Piedmontese at Ceva, they had little to fear. The pushing outwards of the right of the French army on Voltri for Gavi was not a snare: it really was an attempt to force a loan from the Genoese, and was carried out by Schérer unwillingly, and practically under the orders of the Commissioner, Salicetti, who himself hesitated much before deciding. This tempted Beaulieu into imitating the extension on his eastern flank, and Bonaparte, on joining the army, at once struck at his enemy's left. Had the column under d'Argenteau been stronger, it could not have been thrown back so quickly, and if the battalions wasted at Voltri had been in d'Argenteau's rear, Dego could have been held. It was the total inaction of Beaulieu that enabled Bonaparte to force back the Piedmontese out of reach of the Austrians, and to get out of the region of famine. Had he been delayed, as he would have been by a real threat to his right, it is quite possible that the army would have fallen back, for he was not yet its complete master and doubts of his experience had been felt by officers in high positions.<sup>1</sup> I do not like to venture into questions of

<sup>1</sup> Fabry (1796), iii. 324, 378-9, 401-2, 419, 428-9, 473, 481; Marmont, i. 152, 156; Bouvier, 418-20.



strategy, but this part of the campaign is useful mainly as a study of the breaking up of a combined force when one of the two allies does nothing for the other. Here Beaulieu let the Piedmontese, or the Austro-Piedmontese, force of Colli be crushed, whilst the Piedmontese, as if in revenge, concluded an armistice ruinous not only to themselves but also to their allies. Surely the Emperor of Germany was right when he wrote of 'The defection, as disloyal as it is ignominious, of the King of Sardinia, who, in order to obtain an armistice, degrades himself to the point of giving up his fortresses, and will perhaps end by uniting with the enemy';<sup>1</sup> as indeed the King had to do, although the Directory, disregarding the wishes of Bonaparte, would not use the troops he was ready to supply. Bonaparte is great enough to allow one to point out how extraordinarily the action of his enemies helped him here, for the immediate entry of the whole of his army into the plains of Italy, and then into Milan, was not the natural and necessary result of the battles in the Apennines.

It must again be emphasized that Bonaparte was not completely master of his army in these first movements across the mountains. Landrieux represents him as sustaining some bursts of ill humour from Masséna, Kilmaine, and Augereau for hesitating to leave the coast at first; then obstinately refusing to believe Masséna's statement that there was a fort at what Landrieux calls Dego but which evidently was Cosseria; and then being 'querellé' by his Generals all the night after the first assault on Cosseria. Unreasonable as many of Landrieux's criticisms are, they should be read as showing how far from a triumphal march was the burst across the Apennines. Marmont, highly as he himself thought of Bonaparte, after saying that confidence in your commander is one of the first elements of success, goes on, 'When Bonaparte began his operations, they were not undertaken with this support. . . . Not only did his orders fail to be met with that confidence, that faith in its leader which magnifies tenfold the resources of an army, but also the very disposition to obey was shaken by the rivalries and pretensions of much older generals, who had themselves long held commands.' All this passed, for success came so quickly that Bonaparte soon mastered his army, but these first

<sup>1</sup> Trolard, *Montenotte*, 67; Bouvier, 442-7.

operations must stand apart from those that followed. In his first essay in command no doubt Bonaparte may have made mistakes, and probably also learnt much. MM. Krebs and Moris, criticizing General Bernard's work on this campaign, say: 'On the whole, everything was much simpler and, as should be especially noticed, infinitely less precise than General Bernard thinks. Bonaparte's conceptions were only, and could only be, correct in the main; his ardent imagination anticipated events; his orders were almost always given twenty-four hours too soon and required extraordinary efforts from the troops; so that there were numerous counter-orders and hesitations, repaired by the intelligence and initiative of the Generals, the vigour and endurance of the men.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Krebs-Moris, ii. 386, note 3.

## II

### THE AUSTRIANS DRIVEN OUT OF ITALY

(April to July 1796)

Lodi. The Directory's plan to divide 'Italie' between Bonaparte and Kellermann. Bessières and the Guides. First Southern expedition.

#### CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

- 1796 20th May. Austrians denounce armistice on the Rhine.  
31st May. 'Sambre-et-Meuse' advances over Rhine.  
18th June. Wurmser leaves the Rhine with reinforcements for Italy.  
19th June. 'Sambre-et-Meuse' defeated at Uckerath, and retires over Rhine.  
24th June. 'Rhin-et-Moselle' begins crossing the Rhine.  
28th June. 'Sambre-et-Meuse' crosses the Rhine again and begins advance into Germany.  
May to July. 2nd Pacification of La Vendée by Hoche.

THE course of the Armée d'Italie, once it was in the plains, has been so well told that I have but to point out the parts taken by the persons in whom we are interested. Bonaparte had made it one of the terms of the armistice with Piedmont that he should have the right to pass the Po at the town of Valenza, but this would have given the Austrians three rivers whose crossings he must force before he could reach Milan, his next objective. In reality he aimed at getting over much farther east, at Piacenza, though he insisted that the Neapolitan troops which had now joined the Austrians and seized the citadel of Valenza should evacuate that place. Whilst, therefore, Masséna and Sérurier demonstrated near Valenza, the rest of the army, soon to be followed by Masséna, was brought up near Piacenza, and an advanced-guard was formed under Dallemagne; it consisted of four battalions of grenadiers, two of carabiniers (in fact what we should call a 'Light Brigade' of grenadier and fusilier companies of different regiments), and 1,500 cavalry; as we have seen, Colonel Lannes commanded three battalions of the grenadiers. On the 7th May Lieut.-Colonel Andréossi, commanding the pontoon-train, in which Captain Duroc served, was ordered to prepare a bridge over the Po. At two that afternoon Lannes led the way in the boats and was the first man to land on the

right bank of the river. Little resistance was met at first, but next day, the 8th, some miles farther on the road to Milan, a body of the enemy was met and overthrown by Dallemagne at the fortified village of Fombio—which success, Bonaparte declared, was in great part due to the courage of Colonel Lannes. Landrieux, while he acknowledges that Lannes's men killed 80 of the enemy, wounded 200, and also took 700 prisoners, blames him for coming up to the attack so awkwardly that he himself lost 150 killed and 300 wounded at the first volley. 'Lannes is well known. He is the bravest man in the army, but he would have done well to remain a grenadier. Excess of valour is, in a leader, a very great misfortune for the troops he commands. They must be reinforced unceasingly.' Napoleon was also criticized as a great consumer of men. However, Lannes' activity was beyond doubt: 'For two hours', wrote Salicetti, 'Lannes and his grenadiers pursued the Austrians, marching alongside of our Hussars who went on at a full trot' for Codogno.

Expecting an attack by Beaulieu, who had been at Casale, to the north-west, Bonaparte had thrown out Laharpe's division in that direction, and at 2 a.m. on the 9th May this body was attacked by the advanced-guard of Beaulieu, and was thrown into disorder, amidst which Laharpe was killed by a shot from his own men. Dallemagne and Lannes restored the combat, and Berthier volunteered to replace Laharpe. Beaulieu, finding that Liptay was retiring on Pizzighettone, drew back northward, but his troops were pursued by Berthier towards Lodi, and lost a gun and 60 men taken prisoners. The French army now marched to the north-west to force the passage of the Adda at Lodi. Masséna, to whose command was added the advanced-guard of Dallemagne, led the way, followed by Meynier and then by Augereau with the cavalry, now under Kilmaine; Sérurier was in rear. Some 10,000 Austrians held the position, which included a part of the right bank in front of Lodi, and these were attacked by Masséna on both sides of the road, whilst Marmont was sent by Bonaparte with an Hussar regiment to charge on the high road itself. Marmont's horse, shying from a captured gun, threw him, so that the column went over his body, but without touching him. The enemy were driven into Lodi, when Masséna blew open the gates and occupied the town.



Now came the famous charge across the bridge, a real deed, not like the imaginary one at Arcola. This passage of the bridge of Lodi on the 10th May is worth some detail, though not for its actual importance: it was, as Bonaparte said at the time, not a great thing,<sup>1</sup> but it had an effect on himself and on his future. Before him, he believed, was Beaulieu with the mass of the Austrian army, yet, fortified by his recent triumphs, he intended to storm the bridge and so gain the shortest route to Milan and cut off the right of the enemy, which was retreating on that city. In reality he was opposed only by Sebottendorf with the Austrian rear-guard, some 7,500 infantry and 2,500 horse, who meant to draw off in time, but had been delayed and prevented from breaking the bridge by the necessity for evacuating the carriages and troops from Lodi itself. Believing the river, swollen as it was by the melting snow, to be unfordable, the Austrian General thought he could hold his end of the wooden bridge, which, some two hundred paces long, ran from below the town to his position. He therefore placed six guns to sweep the bridge directly, and three others on each side of them to bring a cross-fire to bear on it.<sup>2</sup>

At first only Dallemagne's *avant-garde* was in the town, and Bonaparte had to wait till Masséna's division came up, soon followed by that of Augereau from Borghetto. Meantime he was anxious not to be taken in flank by any of the bodies into which the Austrians had split, and a report that there was still an Austrian force on the right bank of the Adda and below him made him send Marmont to reconnoitre. Time pressed, and Marmont with four Dragoons galloped down the river bank in front of the ramparts and in full view of the enemy, who fired on the party; however, he reached the point he was aiming at, and, finding no one there, returned, this time through the town, having lost two of his men and having had his own horse wounded. At last the head of Masséna's division drew near, while the cavalry had already been pushed out to try and ford the river above and below. Dallemagne's column had been formed up in the town by its General and Masséna, who had come up in advance of the division, and Bonaparte now

<sup>1</sup> 'Però non fu gran cosa'. Bouvier, 539.

<sup>2</sup> For sketch of bridge see Gachot, *Tableaux historiques*, 20, and Trolard, *Montenotte*, 105.

harangued these troops. War, as he was soon to say, was a matter of tact. Bonaparte told the men that they could pass, but that he had not full confidence in them: instead of taking the bridge at one rush they would halt and begin to fire. Then, the men being sufficiently excited, and Masséna's column being close in rear, the gates were opened and the column was hurled on the bridge.<sup>1</sup> Swept by the Austrian case, the first companies staggered and threatened to halt, when, seeing that all was lost if once the advance was checked, Masséna, Dallemagne, Cervoni, and Berthier threw themselves into the column, where Lannes must already have been, and, shouting 'Vive la République!', carried it on. The smoke of the enemy's guns shielded the column a little, and when partly over the men realized that the water, though it ran rapidly, was shallow there, and numbers of them, led by Masséna and Cervoni, threw themselves in. Thigh deep, they waded on, covering by their fire the passage of their comrades on the bridge. When the head of the column had got across a fresh struggle began, for the Austrians brought up more troops and threw back the French on the head of the bridge. Now at last Masséna's troops came up and forced back the enemy, while some of the French cavalry, under Ordener (one of the Imperial Guard in later days), arrived from a ford and took the Austrians in flank. The vice of the enemy's position was now manifested, for, thinking themselves secure of the bridge, they had extended themselves along the bank and had no force to meet the attack which had broken through their centre. They had to retreat and to leave their guns. Augereau, carrying a flag in his hand, at the head of his men, came over after Masséna, and his first troops joined in the fight, whilst the French cavalry pursued, but most of it was too far in rear and the ground was not favourable for its action. The Austrian loss was 153 killed, 182 wounded, 1,701 prisoners, and sixteen guns. The French loss in killed and wounded must have been at least as much.

The names of the men composing the two first sections of the column were collected by Bonaparte, to be sent to their Departments, but Lieut.-Colonel Dupas, who had insisted on his right

<sup>1</sup> In *Tableaux historiques*, 20, the Generals lead the column on horseback, and the Austrian guns are placed on the bridge about one-third of its length from their shore.

to head them, was mentioned only with other officers. 'I ought not', wrote the General commanding, 'to forget the intrepid Berthier, who this day was gunner, horseman, and grenadier.' The promotion of Reille, A.D.C. to Masséna, was requested, and Marmont afterwards received a sword of honour for his share in the day. But it was Bonaparte himself who really was most affected by his success. At Saint Helena he wrote, 'It was only after Lodi that the idea occurred to me that I might, after all, become a decisive actor on our political stage. Then was struck the first spark of high ambition.' Or, as he said otherwise, 'It was only on the evening of Lodi that I believed myself a superior man, and that the ambition came to me of executing the great things which so far had been occupying my thoughts only as a fantastic dream.' An express mention of Montenotte as not exciting his hopes proves, I venture to think, that I am right in my estimate of the first part of the campaign.<sup>1</sup> That taking Lodi as the date for the starting-point of his ambition was not one of the Saint Helena mistakes is shown by the fact that Marmont tells us it was just after this, at Milan, that Bonaparte spoke to him in a strain similar to that of the passages which I have quoted, in words that should be read at length. 'They' (at Paris), he said, 'have seen nothing as yet, and the future reserves for us success far superior to what we have already achieved. . . . In our days no one has conceived anything great: it is for me to set the example.' It was natural enough that neither the street row of Vendémiaire, nor the scramble through the Apennines, had much excited him; now I take it that the charge at Lodi told him that he had won his army; the hesitation and doubts hinted at by Marmont as existing at first had passed, and he had the instrument which he could use. He was in the saddle, and the charger answered to his touch. How far would he take it? To his men he spoke at Cherasco in lofty terms: it would be a proud thing to say, in returning to their villages, 'I belonged to the conquering army of Italy'. But then came a warning which they could not have understood: 'Neither Turin nor Milan are yours'. There were many larger Capitals they were to enter before they returned to their homes.

Perhaps there is room here for a story of Murat at this time.

<sup>1</sup> Las Cases, i. 162 (1st Sept. 1815); *Corr. Nap.* xxix. 101, note 1.



On the day after the battle of Lodi the Bishop of Lodi entertained Bonaparte at a dinner, to which the General chose to bring twelve officers. 'During the meal the arrival of a *capuchin* was announced. "Make him come in," said Bonaparte, "and you, Citizen-Bishop, be good enough to have a cover laid for this religious." The *capuchin* came in, and gave the General a bag of letters taken from Austrian spies. Opening the bag with a little gold key which he took from his waistcoat, Bonaparte saw that the letters were in German, and passed them to an officer, who translated them, making him laugh heartily. The *capuchin* then passed into the ante-room, and, before two servants of Monseigneur de Beretta, of whom one was named Ferrandi, threw off his frock and wig: it was a Colonel,—it was Murat! He then took his place at the table, but did not say a word during the dinner.'<sup>1</sup> Murat had already distinguished himself as a cavalry leader.

In all the first part of the campaign the French cavalry, though it assisted in the capture of prisoners, had not been able to face the enemy's cavalry in the open field. At Lodi, if it had got across, it could have ruined the retreat of the enemy on the left bank, but Kilmaine, who never left anything to chance, and who had gone down the river to seek a ford, found or risked none, and returned at night too late to do anything. As for Beaumont,<sup>2</sup> Desvernois found him a place where he could cross, but instead of using it Beaumont sent Desvernois to report to Bonaparte, as if the General only wanted information about the country. Then, when ordered to cross, he got only a small body up in time to act on the enemy. Salicetti, the Commissioner, writing to the Directory, and probably giving the opinions of Bonaparte, complained of both leaders; and Marmont wrote to his family that it was difficult to describe how little courage the cavalry had: 'The cavalry lacked all the intrepidity that the infantry possessed.' M. Salicetti suggested that Beaumont should be replaced by Murat, who 'by his courage, by his audacity, by the military talents he had displayed,' would fill the post with great advantage. Murat of course was too junior to be

<sup>1</sup> Trolard, 117, quoting Lapugnani, Secretary and executor of the Bishop Beretta; but see Bouvier, 539, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> Marc-Antoine de la Bonninière, Comte de Beaumont (1763–1830); Senator, 1807; 'Pair de France', 1814. Voted for the death of Ney in 1815.



selected in this way, and perhaps it was because he knew of the recommendation and did not get the post that he was discontented, as we shall find him later.

The Directory were most complimentary on the victory. 'Immortal glory to the conquerors of Lodi! Honour to the Commander-in-Chief . . . Honour to the intrepid Berthier, who precipitated himself at the head of this redoubtable and formidable republican column which crushed and overthrew the enemy! Honour to Generals Masséna, Cervoni,' (here follow the names); . . . 'Glory to the brave division which General Augereau commands, and to its chief.' To Berthier himself they wrote: 'You do not cease to prove, Citizen-General, that you combine the most distinguished military qualities: audacity, valour, activity, talent. The brilliant part that you have taken in the success of the operations of the army of Italy since the opening of the campaign, presaged your achievements at the passage of the Po and at the battle of Lodi, which will long be celebrated.' Indeed they may have believed that Berthier deserved even more credit than was really due to him. He was overwhelmed with work, as he informed General Clarke, who was in the War Office at Paris.<sup>1</sup> For the maps he wanted to send to Clarke he could only get one engineer, who could not obtain paints, paper, or pencils from his corps. Clarke might be sure that they would be 'enterprising', and that the topographical department he was in would lose nothing by waiting. In reality they seem to have got little information, so great was the strain on the staff in Italy.

It is curious that the Directory's dispatch, studded with 'Glory' and 'Honour', should revert to a plan for the supersession of Bonaparte by Kellermann, which would probably have left little of Glory or Honour here. As soon as they learnt the first successes of 'Italie', and believed Bonaparte on his way to Milan, the Directors had sent him, on the 7th May, the first intimation of their celebrated plan for the division of 'Italie'. This plan, approved by Carnot, came to a sudden end from the refusal of the masterful Bonaparte to serve under the conditions required by it, and undoubtedly it was most unwise. All the active part of the Armée des Alpes was to be brought down into the plains, and the whole of the force in Italy was then to be

<sup>1</sup> Phipps, ii. 72, for his appointment.

divided between Kellermann and Bonaparte. Kellermann was to operate in the north of Italy, to occupy the Milanese and Lombardy, to keep the Piedmontese quiet, and to observe Mantua. By the first draft of the plan, he was to remain on the defensive, but, as the defeat of the Austrians became more pronounced, his part was extended, and the Directory believed he might pursue the enemy into the mountains of the Tyrol and even push detachments into Germany. This advance, however, far from resembling that which Bonaparte himself carried out in 1797, was only intended to raise contributions and to threaten the communications of the Austrian armies on the Rhine. Indeed, the Directory especially say that Kellermann was at once to furnish Bonaparte with reinforcements, if required. While Kellermann did this in the north of Italy, Bonaparte was to carry out measures to which the Directory attached much more importance: the subjugation of the southern states. Marching on Tuscany, he was to relieve Leghorn from the tyranny of the English; Parma was to be occupied, and a subsidy obtained from Genoa. With true French statesmanship, the Pope was to be required to order public prayers for the prosperity and success of that daughter of the Church, the French Republic, the efficacy of these prayers being assisted by his ceding statues, medals, books, pictures, and silver Madonnas. Nay, the Republic would not disdain even some of the Papal bells. Naples was to surrender the ships and all other property in her ports belonging to the powers at war with France. Finally, a bright vision of the recovery of Corsica closed the vista offered to the conqueror, as if to prevent the whole thing from seeming nothing but a glorious raid for plunder.

Because neither of the two commanders was to be *Generalissimo*, some arrangement was necessary for the transfer of troops from one army to the other, as occasion might require if one or other of the forces were hard pressed. This the Directory thought they had provided for satisfactorily by letting the Commissioners, Garreau and Salicetti, retain the right, given them before, to require movements of troops. 'These arrangements', wrote Carnot on the 7th May, 'would assure union between the two Generals, if love for the Republic and desire for the triumph of our arms did not bind them yet more closely together.' In fairness to Carnot we must remember that this

plan was a great advance on the ideas of the Convention, in whose days it was put forward as rather a happy idea by one of the Representatives in the west that, under certain circumstances, it might be best to let the commander of the Armée des Côtes de Brest place his own troops. As for the evil side of this plan, Carnot, who seems to have been the main, if not the sole, author, was partly influenced by distrust of Bonaparte. It is plain also that the Directors believed there would be no more serious fighting in Italy, and hoped to employ the two commanders, not to follow up the enemy, but in wide expeditions to raise funds for the other armies and for the Government. They knew that the Austrians would probably withdraw troops from the Rhine to reinforce their army in Italy, but they do not seem to have hoped that this detachment would be as large as in fact it was; its departure from the Rhine was to be the signal for the advance of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' under Jourdan and the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' under Moreau. The course actually adopted by the Austrians later, of withdrawing Wurmser and 25,000 men from the Rhine and of fully engaging this force in Italy, while the Archduke Charles had to retreat before the French armies on the Rhine, could not have been expected.<sup>1</sup> Also to Carnot and the Government the aged Kellermann, the victor of Valmy, must have seemed a more trustworthy commander than the young man who, by some happy stroke, no doubt planned by Berthier, had burst into Italy.

Of course, under any conditions, it would have been better to place both armies, 'Alpes' and 'Italie', under one head, as Bonaparte and the younger Robespierre had suggested on the 19th July 1794;<sup>2</sup> but if the Directory had possessed the sense to concentrate commands they would have begun to do so long before on the Rhine, instead of turning the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' and the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' loose in Germany without any *Generalissimo*. The fact is that in this proposed division of forces the Directory saw only a means of employing the troops of 'Alpes': they had not yet risen to the height of understanding the advantage of trusting one man with a large army, instead of splitting up forces. In this very year, whilst Jourdan and Moreau were thrown forward to the farther boundary of Germany, they were leaving the Armée du Nord idle in Holland, just as the

<sup>1</sup> Phipps, ii, Chapter XII.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., iii. 228-9.



*Armée des Alpes* was, nominally at least, left in the mountains. I say nominally, for the masterful Bonaparte forced the hands of the Government, put their orders on one side, and succeeded in draining Kellermann of his troops. Thus strengthened, he made his army the main one, and his policy was successful, but it was a complete reversal of that of the Directory and of Carnot, not only in Italy but in Europe. The statement of the Director Larevellière-Lépeaux, that his colleagues from the first proposed to make 'Alpes' operate separately from 'Italie', leaving it under Kellermann, is a proof of this. He was wrong in believing, as he seems to have believed when writing, that Kellermann from the first was under Bonaparte, but he was doubtless right in his recollection of Carnot's passion for dividing commands; although the nature of the theatre of war in Italy prevented the 'Organizer of Victory' from recommending his favourite strategy of operating against both wings of the enemy!<sup>1</sup>

The burst of wrath with which Bonaparte received this plan and blew it into space is too well known for me to linger over it; but it requires some close study of Bonaparte's character to enjoy the situation fully. 'Kellermann', wrote Bonaparte to Carnot on the 14th May, 'will command the army as well as I can, for no one is more convinced than I am that the victories are due to the courage and audacity of the men; but I believe that to arrange the union of Kellermann and me in Italy is to plan ruin. I cannot serve voluntarily with a man who considers himself the first General in Europe, and, besides, I believe it better to have one bad General than two good ones. War, like Government, is a matter of tact.' He clung to this sensible idea until the end of his life, and at Saint Helena he wrote: 'Unity in command is the most important thing in war.' It is a pity he did not remember this in dealing with his Marshals in Spain. As for the power to be given to the Commissioners to move his troops, he was even more furious at this proposal. What should be done? One thing was certain, the Directory could not accept the resignation which the indignant General offered, and by the 21st May Carnot was formulating the surrender of the Government. The Directory, he wrote, had reflected long and seriously on what they called the proposal of Bonaparte to conduct the military operations of the campaign; and the confidence they had

<sup>1</sup> Phipps, ii. 301, and elsewhere, for Carnot's strategical theories.

in his talents and in his Republican zeal had decided the question in his favour. Kellermann was to remain at Chambéry, and was only to occupy the fortresses handed over by the treaty of peace with Sardinia. The Armée d'Italie was to garrison the places to be occupied under the armistice, as well as Valenza and Alessandria. The times when commanders trembled before the Government were over. Yet the idea of dividing the forces in Italy was too captivating to the Directorial intellect to be abandoned entirely, and when Bonaparte was in Egypt they tried the plan of having an army in Naples as well as one in the north of Italy, with dire results to the three commanders, Schérer, Moreau, and Macdonald. It is enticing to think what the campaigns of 1796-7 might have been if the Directory had had their own foolish way. Kellermann never could have stood alone against Wurmser, and then we should have had something like an anticipation of the 1799 campaign, Kellermann doubling the parts of Schérer and Moreau (himself cleverer than the first, less selfish than the second), while Bonaparte would have shown all the possibilities which lay in the part assigned to Macdonald. The Austrians, going headlong for Genoa or Nice, would have exposed their rear, and some marvellous stroke on the lower Po by Bonaparte might now be a matter of history. Certainly, as it was, we got Rivoli for a *chef-d'œuvre*, but there is no telling what losses the military art and the world have suffered.

As for Kellermann, from the moment when the first victories of Bonaparte carried him into the plains of Italy, it was evident that the separate existence of the Armée des Alpes was doomed; and as early as the 10th May Lacuée, a future Minister of Napoleon's,<sup>1</sup> then engaged in the administration of the armies at Paris, wrote to Grouchy, who was Chief of the Staff to the 'Nord' and seeking some command: 'As to the "Alpes", that army will be null under any name. Almost the whole of it passes under the orders of Bonaparte; and, on this subject, I must say that Kellermann conducts himself in a manner which does him much credit, and of which history will certainly speak very honourably. If that General leaves his command for a better one or for a new career, I doubt his having a successor.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lieut.-Général Jean-Gérard Lacuée, Comte de Cessac (1752-1841), Minister of the *administration de la guerre* under the Empire.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps some idea of sending him on an embassy. See Phipps, i. 344.

It must have been a very hard trial for the old General to see all the victories carried off from under his feet by the young strippling who was driving the Austrians from Italy with troops taken from the *Armée des Alpes*; and it is pleasant to get such testimony to his behaviour as this letter's, especially when we remember that Kellermann was supposed to be inclined to jealousy of other commanders. It cannot have been long before he recognized his complete effacement, for his own son (the Marengo General), hitherto his A.D.C., left him, no doubt with his approval, and we hear of him on the 8th May in the *Armée d'Italie* as a Colonel-Adjutant-General and staff officer to one of the two divisions of cavalry. Then the younger Kellermann got another A.D.C. of his father's, Lasalle,<sup>1</sup> transferred to 'Italie' as his assistant. In September 1792, when Bonaparte was a young Captain, the eyes of Europe had been directed on Kellermann, fighting at the head of one of the great armies of the Republic a battle on which the safety of the country depended; and now his troops, his staff, and even his son, were being drawn into the trail of the great comet which was sweeping up the sky.

The Directory remarked that it was needless to recommend Bonaparte to have the necessary consideration for 'the long service and military talents' of Kellermann, whose disagreeable position they obviously recognized. The younger General seems indeed for a time to have displayed some courtesy towards his colleague, and on the 9th May he sent him from Piacenza two carriage-horses, chosen by the younger Kellermann. To please the father, Bonaparte praised the son, who had already been useful to him, and who 'combined activity with the merit that makes an officer precious'. Courtesy apart, however, the troops of 'Alpes' were soon *en route* for Italy, and, as was inevitable with Bonaparte, complaints soon arose about returns of strength and of intended movements: indeed, his consideration for Kellermann might be expected to be that of a railway engine for the coal on its tender.

One effect of Bonaparte's victories was the expulsion of Louis XVIII from Verona. Louis had arrived there in June 1794, taking the title of Regent, and then on the death of the son of Louis XVI assuming that of King. The Directory had called on Venice to expel him and on the 13th April 1796, after Monte-

<sup>1</sup> The light cavalry General of the Empire. Phipps, iii. 240, and note 1.



notte, the Senate ordered him to leave their territory. He behaved with dignity, writing to the Senate that, yielding to force, he would go, but first he claimed that the Golden Book of Venice should be brought to him in order that he might erase from it the name of Bourbon; and that the suit of armour presented to the Republic by his ancestor, Henry IV, should be returned to him. Though the *Podestà* of Verona protested against this reply, the King adhered to it, but the Senate took no notice and Louis had to leave in no very dignified manner. His debts were so heavy that he had to avoid his creditors. On the 21st April 1796 one of his court, the Duc de Vauguyon, who resembled him in height and corpulence, started in a carriage for Volarno, the first stage for the Tyrol, whilst Louis with the Comte d'Avaray in a light berlin took the road through Castelnovo for Brescia, Bergamo, Bellinzona, and the Saint Gothard, to join the army of Condé on the Rhine, where we have seen him.<sup>1</sup> It is one of the oddities of the situation that Kilmaine thought afterwards of paying Louis' debts. It would have been pleasant if the debts of the King of France had been paid by a General of the Republic out of plunder wrung from the Italians.<sup>2</sup>

We must now return to the operations after Lodi. Before advancing farther, Bonaparte re-formed his army into four active divisions, under Menard, Augereau, Masséna, and Sérurier, with the reserve cavalry under Kilmaine, whom we have last seen commanding the Armée des Ardennes in 1793.<sup>3</sup> The last named General was soon given the command of the *avant-garde*, formed of four cavalry regiments and Dallemagne's eight battalions of grenadiers, with which Colonel Lannes served. In rear Macquard commanded the district round Cuneo, or Coni; Hacquin,<sup>4</sup> brought up from the Armée du Midi, held Cherasco, and Meynier the district round Tortona. In Masséna's division Victor led a brigade of two regiments soon to be famous, the 18th (formerly the 69th), in which Lieut.-Colonel Suchet had a battalion, and the 32nd. The stores of the army were replenished.

<sup>1</sup> Phipps, ii. 291.

<sup>2</sup> See *Our First Ambassador to China; an Account of the Life of George, Earl of Macartney*, by Helen H. Robbins. (Murray, 1908, 8vo.)

<sup>3</sup> Phipps, i. 171, 180.

<sup>4</sup> He had commanded a division in the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' under Jourdan. Phipps, ii. 181.

Then on the 13th May Masséna's division, the *avant-garde* led by Joubert, entered Milan amidst the cheers of the people, and on the 15th May both these Generals went out to meet Bonaparte, who, surrounded by his Guides, passed through streets lined by the municipal guard, under a triumphal arch, and into the town.

The possession of Milan seemed to put a seal on the victories of the army which had starved for so long by the Apennines. The troops were given a short rest, and were pleased and probably much astonished at receiving a month's pay in cash! 'It was the first time since 1793 that we had received cash,' says Roguet of the 32nd; 'from this date the army was paid by contributions from the country,' and much was done for the supply of clothing and stores to the men, although many hardships had yet to be borne. Of course this system was open to great abuse, and on the very first pay-day Bonaparte had to complain to Masséna of the way in which officers of his division had demanded not only linen and shoes, but even horses, from the inhabitants of Piacenza. We may suspect that this was an indirect hint to Masséna himself. Milan would have to furnish heavy contributions, but these were to be levied by the Commissioners of the Directory and by the Commander-in-Chief. From the diary of an Italian priest we get an idea of the appearance of the troops of 'Italie' at this time; he is describing the regiments of Augereau entering Pavia. 'The clothes of officers and men are torn and threadbare. . . . They have neither tents nor baggage. They have no proper uniform: some wear pantaloons, others breeches; these wear boots, those shoes; you see some with waistcoats, or wearing the first clothes they have got hold of. The coat is blue with a red collar. . . . As head-dress I have seen some with a hat, but most have a leather *casque*, with an *aigrette* in soft skin, or a horsetail.' . . . Then, remarking how wonderfully well they had behaved, the priest goes on, 'But what is more remarkable still, is, that these men, dying of hunger, generally small, weak, worn out by fatigue and privation, without clothes or shoes—men that one would take for the dregs of a wretched population—should have conquered the Austrian army, which had everything in abundance, food, clothes, guns, magazines of all sorts, and which is composed of *gaillards* of great height, robust, and inured to war.' Words

which should be remembered when it comes to judging what men can do, or whether an all-important position should be abandoned because of the exhaustion of the troops.

The siege or blockade of the citadel of Milan, which the Austrians still held, was begun by Masséna's division, but was soon left to Despinois, who was called up from the rear. The army then began its march eastwards and, after passing through Lodi again, head-quarters were at Crema on the 24th May, when Bonaparte went back to Milan, leaving Berthier to continue the advance. Passing the Oglio, Berthier placed the army round Brescia, and on the 26th May Bonaparte rejoined head-quarters at Soncino, much to the relief of his Chief of the Staff, who had been made anxious by not hearing of him for twenty-four hours and who, far from being happy in command, was declaring that Bonaparte's presence was 'indispensable', and that the army was awaiting him with impatience. His position may have been made more awkward by the fact that he had irritated Masséna by accusing him of taking 10,000 rations intended for the other divisions; this appears to have been a mistake on Berthier's part. Bonaparte's absence must now be explained. Taking Marmont and Murat, he had gone back at first to Milan, and eventually as far west as Tortona, to punish the revolt which had broken out in his rear. Irritated by the way in which the inhabitants had slaughtered his men, he punished severely: Pavia, for instance, on the 25th May was systematically and mercilessly plundered. Indeed, at Saint Helena he rather apologized for having limited the pillage to a few hours instead of to twenty-four: 'Besides, I had only 1,500 men; if I had had more I would have inflicted the whole punishment.' During the plundering the Receiver-General of the town, finding his house threatened by the soldiers, sought safety by throwing money into the street. To stop this, Bonaparte sent Marmont to bring away the money. Marmont, disliking the work, collected the cash before as many officers as he could assemble, and handed it all over. Afterwards, he says, Bonaparte blamed him for not having retained the sum for himself. This is a possible story, but it is not in accordance with Bonaparte's usual attitude. Before Pavia had been dealt with Lannes had been sent with a small column on Binasco, half-way between Milan and Pavia, where the peasants had



collected in arms, and where he was ordered to give no quarter. On the 24th May Lannes took the village and, after the women and children had been removed, his troops made short work of the men, and then burnt the village thoroughly. When Bonaparte arrived he was moved to tears, but in answer to the entreaties of a doctor he replied that the safety of the army required a great example; still, he lent help to extinguish the conflagration, which, however, burnt on for three days.

Bonaparte now returned to his army, which was in the neighbourhood of Brescia and was entering on a new phase of its operations: it was about to pass on to Venetian territory and to continue its war with the Austrians in a neutral country. We have seen something like this on the Rhine,<sup>1</sup> but here the Venetian fortresses complicated the question. By the treaty of Sainte-Euphémie, which Bonaparte concluded with the Venetians on the 27th May, Venice was to remain neutral and to let the two hostile forces fight one another on its territory, but to close its fortresses to both sides. If one power seized a fortress, then the other might besiege it, and the Venetians would also throw open all their other strongholds to the aggrieved power, which should have the right to garrison them, though the Venetian troops were to keep order in the interior of such places. This treaty was so absurd that on reflection the Venetian Deputies who concluded it saw their mistake; but it was too late. Bonaparte had wrested it from them by his pretended anger at what he described as their bad faith in having allowed the Austrians to occupy Peschiera, although he knew that Beaulieu had only got into the place by asking for the passage of fifty men, and then introducing more. He himself took Peschiera at once, and this inability of the Venetians to hold their forts led to his occupation of Verona and other places, so that for all practical purposes the mainland possessions of Venice were soon held by the French, who acted there as masters, treating any attack on them as rebellion. This is but one example of the lesson these wars should teach us, that a neutral State, unable to enforce its neutrality, is always treated as fair game by both sides. Since the armistice of Cherasco the fighting hitherto had been on Austrian territory, for the Duchy of Milan and the Marquisate of Mantua belonged to Austria.

<sup>1</sup> Phipps, ii. 213-14.

They were separated from her by Venetian territory, but by an agreement, which was really contrary to the neutrality of Venice but which had been tacitly allowed by the powers, Austria was permitted a passage for her troops from the Tyrol down the Adige, by the Chiusa, Colombarra, and Castelnovo, to Mantua and other places. A horn of the Austrian territory ran north here, reaching to Castiglione and not far south of Lago di Garda. Had Beaulieu retired by this route Bonaparte would have had no cause of complaint against Venice; but the Austrian General, finding that both Peschiera and the Chiusa were weakly held by the Venetian troops, feared that the French might disregard the neutrality of those points and might cut off his retreat into the Tyrol by seizing them. It will be seen that Beaulieu was raising a large question. Venice could not have preserved her neutrality except by having in all her fortresses garrisons strong enough to hold them against all comers.

After being driven from the Milanese, Beaulieu stood on the left bank of the Mincio, with his head-quarters at Valeggio, meaning to retire up the Adige as soon as the enemy appeared in force, but his troops were scattered: his right was holding Peschiera and his left, under Colli, partly composed of troops from Mantua, was to the south at Goito. An arch of the bridge at Borghetto had been cut, but when Masséna attacked on the 29th May some of his troops forded the river below, and the Austrians, fearing to be turned, drew off. Masséna then crossed to Valeggio, and forced Beaulieu to leave his bed and take to his carriage. Sérurier had distracted the attention of the enemy by demonstrations lower down the river. Meanwhile Augereau, turning northward, made for Peschiera, but his advanced-guard was attacked and bearen back by a force under Liptay, who then retired east on Castelnovo. The Austrians eventually extricated themselves from a position which, after the capture of Valeggio, was one of great danger. Their right and centre crossed the Adige by bridging it at the Chiusa, and by Verona. Colli had first marched by Goito up the Mincio to attack the right of the French, but hearing what had happened he sent his infantry and guns south into Mantua and with his cavalry joined Beaulieu at Villafranca, which Masséna entered next morning. Beaulieu went north to Roveredo and then to Trent,

where, now driven out of Italy into the Tyrol, he sought to re-form his army. Then, while Masséna marched eastwards for Verona, Sérurier turned south for Mantua, taking post at La Favorita to the north of the town, and Augereau after occupying Peschiera came down on the left bank of the Mincio to hold the Cerese on the south of Mantua.<sup>1</sup> Masséna occupied the Venetian town of Verona on the 1st June, the neutral state having no power to resist. He was now left with his own division, strengthened by Victor's brigade (in which Suchet's regiment, the 18th, was included) and Sauret's division, altogether about 19,000 strong, to watch the enemy, the mass of whom were in the valley of the Adige, where they checked an attack by Victor.

It was now that Captain Bessières got his first real rise in life. After passing the Adige Bonaparte and his staff had halted to rest in a large house, not far from the village of Valeggio but some little distance from the river. He should have been protected by Masséna's division, but the troops had remained on the right bank having their meal while the bridge was being repaired. It was very hot and the General and his party had partly undressed. Suddenly the report of a gun and some pistol shots were heard, and fugitives gave the alarm that the enemy were at hand. Marmont flew to close the great gates of the courtyard, while the horses were got ready, and the whole staff came out in a body, prepared to ride through any cavalry that might oppose them. Bonaparte, however, did not trust to this method but got out on foot by a side door, half-dressed, with one leg booted and the other naked. Together with Murat he ran off. They met a Dragoon galloping away and, taking his horse, got to the bridge. The alarm had been caused by two Neapolitan cavalry regiments that were passing by and had approached to see if the place was occupied. Some gunners, sent to bring in guns abandoned by the enemy, had fired on them, sending them off.<sup>2</sup> The danger he had run, for he certainly would have been captured had the enemy really been in the village, impressed itself on Bonaparte, who now established a company of Guides to be always with him. He had already remarked Bessières at

<sup>1</sup> See map facing p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> Koch, ii. 439, says he could get no corroboration for this surprise, but the point is settled by Marmont, i. 181-4; Rabel, 13-14; Desvernois, 54.



Borghetto in crossing the Adige, when, his horse being killed, Bessières with a few men ran at an Austrian gun and captured it. As with Murat, his 'pays' no doubt spoke in his favour,<sup>1</sup> so on the 5th June he was given command of the company of Guides. This in time was to become the *Régiment des Chasseurs-à-cheval* of the Guard, whose green uniform with scarlet pelisse is so well known. These Guides for the personal protection of the commander of an army are generally taken as a special formation of Bonaparte's, but in reality each army should have had a company, composed of a Captain, a Lieutenant, a Sergeant, two Corporals, and 16 Guides, as ordered on the 25th April 1792.<sup>2</sup> The Armée du Nord had 24 and that of the 'Rhin' 16 in 1794. Hoche certainly had his when in command in La Vendée, and with the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' in 1797, and we have seen the 'Canaries' of Pichegru with the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'.<sup>3</sup> I think the 'Alpes' had something of the sort, and I have mentioned that Bonaparte entered Milan accompanied by Guides, but both 'Alpes' and 'Italie' had worked so much amongst mountains and had had so much difficulty in feeding horses, that they had not wanted Guides. Now in the plains it was different, and the long duration of Bonaparte's command, and his taking his Guides to Egypt, with his subsequent rise to power, gave permanence to this corps. Some slight foreshadowing of the 'Old Guard' may be traced in the allotment of two battalions of grenadiers and fifty Guides, under Colonel Lannes, for the protection of head-quarters.

The cavalry, which had been left starving in the Rhône valley until this campaign, now had become of importance, for the infantry, not accustomed to meet cavalry and 'having made war', says Pellepôrt, 'only in the mountains of the Alps and the Pyrenees, and in La Vendée, lacked firmness against mounted troops'. Some of the companies of the 18th, Suchet's regiment, had suffered from the Neapolitan cavalry after crossing the Adige, but on that occasion General Murat, returned from Paris and often acting with the cavalry, charged the Neapolitans with two Chasseur regiments and beat them off, winning praise from

<sup>1</sup> He was born at Preissac, or Prayssac, near Cahors, as was Murat. Phipps, iii. 141-3.

<sup>2</sup> Coutanceau, *La Campagne de 1794 à l'Armée du Nord*: Ire Partie, Organization, Paris, Chapelot, 1905. (See vol. i. 156.) Phipps, i. 37-8.

<sup>3</sup> Phipps, i. 38.

Bonaparte, who described him as performing prodigies of valour, and wrote: 'This was the first time that the French cavalry, seeing the bad state in which it had been, measured itself with advantage against the Austrian cavalry. It took nine guns, two colours, and 2,000 men, amongst whom was the Prince de Cuto, commanding the Neapolitan cavalry.' Kilmaine, the cavalry commander, also praised Murat, 'who made a superb charge at the head of the 10th Hussars. It is he who decided the second rout.' Bonaparte probably was glad to be able to praise the arm, for Beaumont, one of its commanders, had complained of its having been disparaged, apparently at head-quarters, and had had to be appeased.<sup>1</sup> It is curious that the Neapolitans should have been considered so formidable, but Bonaparte thought well of them, and, sneering at the ways of diplomatists, explained to Miot that his main aim in making an armistice with Naples was to get rid of their horse, which, he said, had done him much harm and which he desired to be rid of as soon as possible. These Neapolitan regiments remained neutralized and detached in small bodies in the north of Italy for a long time.

To return to Verona; Masséna established himself at first in the palace Luigi Franco: next day he went to the palace of the Counts Carriola at Prella, near Caprino, and then three days later he shifted to the villa of the Counts Pellegrini at Castione, on the lake; finally, in the middle of July 1796, fixing himself in the house now called Perez, but then Marinelli, near Piovezzano. Bonaparte himself had entered Verona on the 3rd June 1796 with Bessières, and had met the notables of the town, who were too frightened to speak, at the Piazza dei Signori, after which he and Bessières visited the monuments of the town. Bonaparte occupied what is now the Palazzo Mejo, then belonging to Count Emilei, at San Bagio. Here, it is said, alarmed at the noise made by a mirror cracking in the heat of a lamp, he believed a Creole servant had tried to assassinate him and fired at the man, luckily with bad aim. As another insurrection had broken out in rear of the army, on the 9th June Lannes was ordered on Tortona with a battalion and three light companies of the 12th Light Infantry. Bonaparte himself went back once more through Milan to Tortona, and on the 14th June ordered Lannes to advance on Pozzolo with 1,200 men, and then

<sup>1</sup> 'Il n'a jamais été dit que la cavalerie ne valait rien.' *Corr. Nap.* i, No. 436.

on Arquata,<sup>1</sup> where the insurgents were again punished, Bonaparte issuing a proclamation warning the people of the 'terrible spectacle' Arquata presented after passing into the hands of Lannes. In all this Lannes had no personal responsibility, being only chosen, partly because he was available, partly from his being sure to carry out his orders. Mercy is a beautiful quality, but here it was a question of securing the safety of the small parties who were on the long line of communication of the army, and who were an easy prey for the large assemblies of armed peasants. Believing that Genoa was implicated in these risings, Bonaparte on the 15th June sent his A.D.C. Murat to the Senate with a letter demanding the dismissal of the Governor of Gavi, the expulsion of the Neapolitan ambassador Girola, and the securing of the roads by Genoa itself, all of which were complied with by the Senate.

After this punitive expedition two columns were formed for operations in the South.<sup>2</sup> The first column consisted of Augereau with his division, some 4,820 men from in front of Mantua, who crossed the Po at Borgoforte and moved on Bologna, which he reached on the 18th June and where, as we shall see later, he plundered on his own account. On the 20th Bonaparte himself, who had come through Modena with another column, that of Vaubois, whose movements I will describe later, arrived with his staff and 're-established' the Senate, freeing it from any obedience to Rome; he then returned to Vaubois. Augereau remained in command at Bologna, charged with the levy of contributions, &c., work congenial to him. On the 5th July 1796, just as he received orders to go north to Legnago, he had to march against Lugo,<sup>3</sup> where 'une armée apostolique' of from 15,000 to 20,000 men had assembled and had killed some French soldiers. This business Augereau settled himself at the head of a battalion, two guns, and a squadron of cavalry, making, what he truly described as 'un exemple terrible', only the women and children being saved; the men were killed, and Lugo itself was plundered and burnt until partly spared on the arrival of a courier from Bonaparte. Augereau then issued a magniloquent address in which the friendship of the French Republic was compared to a volcano, devouring everything if irritated but

<sup>1</sup> On the Scrivia to the east of Novi. Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 95-6.

<sup>2</sup> See map on p. 147.

<sup>3</sup> Between Bologna and Ravenna.



caressing any one seeking its support, which is not what most people would say of a volcano. Then he and his division went back north to Legnago on the Adige.

The other column for the South, some 7,600 men under Vaubois, was mainly formed of troops from Kellermann's *Armée des Alpes*, but General Murat was sent to command its advanced-guard, composed of two cavalry regiments and a battalion of grenadiers under Colonel Lannes. The younger Kellermann went as one of the Adjutant-Generals, and Bonaparte, with his staff, certainly with Berthier and Junot, at first marched with Vaubois. One incident of the march is worth recounting as a warning. In front of Modena was a small fort, Fort Urban, held by troops of the Pope, who apparently were not quite certain whether the French were foes or not. Marmont, marching ahead of the column with a squadron of Dragoons, was ordered to pass by quietly unless he saw the gate of the fort was open, when he was to pounce on the place. Outside the fort he found the officers of the garrison, who were anxious, as their commandant, called away by Bonaparte, had not returned; but as Marmont assured them that he was a short way in rear and that they could meet him, they most foolishly moved forward. Then, seeing the gate open, Marmont galloped in with his Dragoons, taking the astonished garrison prisoner. Twenty-eight guns were thus obtained for the siege of Mantua. This exploit is ascribed by Napoleon, when at Saint Helena, to another officer, Vignolles; but the point remains, that in presence of armed men any fort should remain closed, however friendly the party approaching may seem to be. While Vaubois from Modena turned south for Pistoja, Bonaparte and his staff went on to join the column of Augereau, where we have seen him, and about the 24th June he rejoined Vaubois at Pistoja. Leading the column from Pistoja, on the 27th June Murat crossed the Arno at Fucechio, as if for Siena, and then turned to his right suddenly on Leghorn, in hope of surprising the English ships there; but the wary islanders had sailed for Corsica, as Miot had warned Bonaparte when at Bologna. Bonaparte followed Vaubois to Leghorn, and then, leaving him to command there, went with Berthier and Murat to Florence, where he was rejoined by Marmont, who, after the affair at Fort Urban, had first been sent alone to summon Ferrara. This city opened its

gates at once and furnished artillery for Sérurier to use before Mantua. Then rejoining Bonaparte at Pistoja, Marmont had next been sent to Florence, to the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Florence had been thrown into alarm by the news that a French column was advancing on it, but these troops were turned off, and Marmont brought back a personal invitation from the Grand Duke for the commander, who on his return from Leghorn passed through Florence, on the 1st July. Lannes had been sent to make the authorities of the small state of Massa-Carrara swear obedience to the French Republic, and to bring the spoil of the governmental property there to Leghorn.

During this time the staff of Bonaparte, as far as we are concerned, had remained unchanged, except for the appointment of Captain Bessières to command the Guides, which brought him into such close contact with the General that, as in the case of Berthier, we may take him as with Bonaparte unless otherwise stated. Berthier, as we have seen, had been left with the army for a few days, much to his annoyance, while Bonaparte had been suppressing the revolt in rear, and he had only become as happy as usual when once more by the side of his General, who now told the Directory, when the letters seized at Bologna were in his hands, 'the indefatigable Berthier, who has passed the whole night in going through the mails from Venice, Florence, and Rome, will send you letters from *émigrés* and from several Princes, which have seemed curious and important enough to us. There are many in English and in cipher.' Perhaps the younger Kellermann, who knew English, helped in this work. General Murat seems to have held a peculiar position, partly A.D.C., partly cavalry leader, in which latter capacity we have seen him highly praised at Valeggio. Marmont tells his own tale of frequent detachment on missions, and no doubt Junot was used in the same manner. The constant employment of Colonel Lannes for special work will be noticed.

These were happy days for Bonaparte, on whom Fortune was showering her gifts with both hands. His fervent letters to Joséphine in Paris had seemed absurd to her; but perhaps feeling that he was quite capable of returning to fetch her, however unwilling she might be, she had torn herself from the Capital, and with Joseph Bonaparte, escorted by Murat and

Junot and met by Marmont at Turin, she arrived at Milan on the 29th June, the day on which the citadel was surrendered. She was lodged in the palace lent by the Duke of Serbelloni.<sup>1</sup> 'Then', says Marmont, 'he lived only for her . . . never has a truer, a purer, a more exclusive love possessed the heart of a man.' He had been pleased personally by the way in which his wife had been treated by the Piedmontese court during her journey, and he was gratified at his reception by a Prince of the blood royal of Austria, the Grand Duke Ferdinand. He had brushed aside by the mere threat of resignation the wild plan of the Directory to divide the forces in Italy between Kellermann and himself. Also the seizure of Leghorn, with the subsidies he had wrung from certain states, notably from the Pope, had placed him in the position of paymaster to the Directory: a million francs had gone to the armies on the Rhine and more to the Directory, whose carriages were even horsed by him. Whilst other commanders had to beg for money from the Government, he subsidized it. His own troops were paid at last, so that he was now thoroughly their master. His was an entirely different position from that which any commander of an army of the Republic had ever held.

This dispatch of horses to the Directory seems to show something already of contempt on the part of Bonaparte towards that body. 'To-morrow one hundred carriage horses, the finest to be got in Lombardy, start from Milan; they will replace "les chevaux médiocres" which draw your carriages.' No one likes a sneer at his team. How were these fine horses obtained? No doubt much as in Rome in 1798, when we find Princesse Borghese<sup>2</sup> reduced by 'contributions' from having sixty good horses to two hacks. The horses now sent by Bonaparte arrived at Paris on the 1st August 1796, together with two million francs, part of the shower of gold which fell from Italy on the Directors. These worthies, grandly if rather ludicrously dressed, had allotted themselves each a carriage, two horses, and two coachmen or servants; but until Bonaparte's teams arrived their stables had got on badly.

<sup>1</sup> Turquan, *Souveraines et grandes dames: La Générale Bonaparte*, Paris, Librairie Illustrée, n.d. (See pp. 46-70); Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille*, 13 vols., Paris, Ollendorf, 1897-1919 (See vol. i, pp. 147-9); Lévy, *Napoléon intime*, Paris, Plon, Nourrit et Cie, 1893 (pp. 112-18). <sup>2</sup> Not Pauline Bonaparte.



### III

## CASTIGLIONE

(August 1796)

Operations against Mantua. Lonato. The two battles of Castiglione.  
'The Augereau myth.' Bonaparte's opinion of his Generals.

#### CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

- 1796 July. Both Rhine armies advance into Germany.  
8th August. 'Sambre-et-Meuse' on the Regnitz: its farthest point of advance.  
11th August. 'Rhin-et-Moselle' wins battle of Neresheim.  
19th August. Alliance between France and Spain.  
23rd August. Retreat of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' begins.  
24th August. 'Rhin-et-Moselle' win battle at Friedburg.  
August. Treaties between France and the smaller German states.

THE one cloud on the horizon was the resistance of Mantua, a fortress which was for long to hang like a chain on the Armée d'Italie, and nearly to wreck it; indeed from now until February 1797 the war in Italy was but a struggle for the place. The battles of Lonato, Castiglione, Roveredo, Bassano, Saint-Georges or La Favorita, the Brenta, Caldiero, Arcola, Rivoli, and a second La Favorita, were fought to gain or save it, and three times 'Italie' had to confront a fresh onslaught of the Austrians who sought to deliver the garrison of the city. At this moment, however, Bonaparte had no anticipation of a long contest in Italy: now he was supplied with a siege train the place would fall, for he trusted that the two armies on the Rhine frontier, the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' under Jourdan and the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' under Moreau, would prevent any large reinforcements being sent to the beaten force in front of him, and, his hands once free, then Hey for Tyrol!

Mantua, as two capable critics, Bonaparte and Desaix, agreed, derived its strength not from its fortifications but from the lakes, upper, middle, and lower, which curved around it, and which, often varying in height, left in their fall marshes which caused fever, a far more deadly foe both to besiegers and besieged than bullet or shot. The town stood as it were on an island, where the upper lake, lying east

and west, was joined to the lower lake, lying north and south, by the middle lake, curving round the town to its east. On the north the citadel, with La Favorita in front of it, formed one *tête-de-pont*, and Fort Saint-Georges gave another outlet to the east. To the west, on the southern side of the upper lake, the Pradella work formed another *tête-de-pont*, and a great marsh, with the Migliaretto work, covered the place to the south.<sup>1</sup> If the water defence made it difficult to approach, it also made it hard for the garrison to sally out, and Bonaparte said with much truth that he had blockaded 20,000 men with only 7,000. He hoped, with good reason, to take the town in a siege of twenty days with open trenches, when he would have garrisoned it with from 2,000 to 3,000 French, and some Italian troops. All this was satisfactory enough.

To describe the operations against Mantua I must go back to the arrival of the army on the Mincio and the Adige. On the 1st June Sérurier with his division of 4,700 men was ordered from Valeggio by Goito to reconnoitre the northern side of the fortress, and Augereau on the 3rd June was sent to pass the Mincio below Mantua and to invest the place on the south, while Dallemagne with a small body, with which Colonel Lannes served, took post opposite Saint-Georges on the east. Kilmaine with the cavalry, posted at Roverbella to the north, linked Sérurier with Masséna, who held the ground on the south of Lago di Garda. The allotment of the positions was doubtless dictated by mere convenience, but it was to have an evil effect on the fortunes of Sérurier. The first operations of the besiegers were happy, for on the 3rd June Dallemagne and Lannes took the Saint-Georges suburb and *tête-de-pont* on the east, while on the south and west Augereau got foot on the island amidst the marshes; on the west he advanced his men to within 1,000 yards of the Pradella gate. Then came a break in the operations, and some of the troops were ordered away by Bonaparte. Lannes, if he remained at the siege after this attack on the 3rd June, was sent away on the 9th for Tortona, where we have seen him with Bonaparte; and on the 12th Augereau was ordered to Bologna for the Southern expedition, which I have

<sup>1</sup> See plan in Thiers, *Rev.*, *Atlas*, xviii; Jomini, *Atlas*, xxiv; Alison, *Atlas*, xiv. For description of it, see Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 100-2; Jomini, *Rev.* viii. 158-62; *Corr. Nap.* xxix. 117-18.

described. Dallemagne, under Sérurier, took the place of Augereau in the blockade on the south and west. Sérurier, who established himself at Roverbella, on the 10th June was placed in command not only of the blockade but also of the defence of the Adige below Masséna, from Porto-Legnago downstream to Badia. Bonaparte says he had 8,000 men, which seems more than were allotted, but even that was weak compared with a garrison whether of 8,000 or 14,000 men inside the town. In the detail Bonaparte gave him the 18th Regiment, that of Lieut.-Colonel Suchet, but in reality this regiment remained with Masséna. Lespinasse was commanding the artillery, and Duroc was probably now that General's A.D.C. On the 8th June Sérurier, having reconnoitred the place with Lespinasse and the engineer Chasseloup,<sup>1</sup> recommended that to the north the citadel should be attacked and to the south the front of the town, besides other parts being bombarded; but he asked for 54 siege guns, 22 mortars, 20,000 to 25,000 infantry, and 1,000 cavalry, besides 1,000 artillery. This force Bonaparte could not supply, and the blockade had to be continued, fever weakening the troops by fifty men a day.

At last, when Bonaparte's expedition to the South was over, all the troops used for that purpose, except the garrisons of Leghorn and other places, were brought back to the left of the Po; and as the necessary siege ordnance had been obtained from Fort Urban and other places in the south it was possible to begin a formal siege of Mantua. Still, as reports of the intention of the Austrians to advance from the Tyrol grew stronger, Bonaparte determined first to attempt to take the place by a *coup-de-main*, one of those deeds which, as he told the Directory, depended for its success but on a dog or a goose. The main attack was to be made from the south, but to the east a column under Murat, returned from a reconnaissance on Porto-Legnago, was to cross the lower lake in boats and try to take the works in rear. A trick of a dubious nature was to be tried. An officer with a curious history, Lahoz,<sup>2</sup> was to command a party of men dressed

<sup>1</sup> François, Marquis de Chasseloup-Laubat (1754-1833).

<sup>2</sup> Général Lahoz, of a noble Italian family; served in the Austrian army; joined the French in 1796. Was placed in command of the troops of the Cisalpine Republic, but, disgusted by the interference of General Brune by direction of the Directory in 1798, he turned against the French and was killed defending Ancona in 1799. *Biog. des Cont.* iii. 88; Michaud, *Biog. Univ.*



like Austrians, who were to land with Murat, and, mingling with the defenders, retire with them into the works, and then to seize a gate and admit Murat's men. Sérurier was to direct the whole affair. On the 16th July a sortie of the garrison was beaten back and next day the attack was made; but the water in the lake had fallen three feet, the boats for Murat had to seek shelter from the fire of the defenders amongst the reeds, and, getting aground, could not be refloated; while a bridge of boats thrown over the Mincio was broken by the guns of the works. Next day the attempt was renewed, when Murat crossed on a bridge of boats and other columns attacked the southern or Migliaretto works, Sérurier again supervising the whole. The French got close up to the entrenchments, indeed a few men even got in, but some shots fired in error, apparently by Murat's column, made them draw back; still, the trench was regularly opened against the place. The French employed gunboats, which, decked with their flags, pleased Desaix when he saw them the next year—'elles sont jolies à voir.' Bonaparte with his staff had watched the operations from Saint-Georges. Then on the 18th July, writing from Castiglione, Berthier summoned the place, by order of Bonaparte, declaring that the laws of war imperiously prescribed the surrender, as resistance would ruin the town, and threatening the governor with all the rigours of war if he held out; but Count Canto d'Irles replied on the 20th, briefly, that the laws of honour and of duty compelled him to defend the place entrusted to him to the last extremity, as of course Bonaparte must have known.

The details I have given of these attacks on Mantua have a certain value, as Marmont, through error of memory as I believe, has said that Murat was accused of having caused the check of the direct assault by his want of vigour. This seems impossible, for, though Bonaparte might possibly pass over in silence the fault of a favourite A.D.C., he certainly would not have employed him again at once on similar work, nor would he have praised him in dispatches: Mantua was too valuable a prize for that. Now, writing to the Directory on the 22nd July 1796, Bonaparte attributed the failure to seize a gate—the enterprise which was entrusted to Murat—to the fall of the water: 'It was not possible to attempt this *coup-de-main*.' He went on to describe the affair next day in which 'Generals Dallemagne and Murat fulfilled

their mission and carried disorder and alarm into the ranks of the enemy'. Writing at Saint Helena in a mood not over favourable to Murat, Napoleon gives the same cause, the fall of the water, for the first failure, and again mentions Generals Murat and Dallemagne as, after a sufficiently severe fight, gaining possession of part of the firm ground near the entrenchments of the Migliaretto, a most important possession. An allegation of a similar character against Murat, by Bourrienne, is taken by Belliard as referring, wrongly, to another affair before Mantua in October 1796.<sup>1</sup> It is, however, fair to state that the engineer, Chasseloup-Laubat, writing to Bonaparte on the 9th August 1796, when the blockade had just been re-established after Castiglione, says, 'When one thinks of what importance Mantua is to us, one cannot but regret that Murat did not attack the entrenched camp, as had been planned.'

In noticing the services of Sérurier, who had directed the operations, Bonaparte paid him a rather tardy compliment. 'I shall not speak to you', he wrote to the Directors, 'of the conduct of the intrepid General Sérurier, whose military reputation is established, and to whom we owe, amongst other things since the campaign began, the victory of Mondovi.' Here let me remark that Bonaparte always spoke of his officers much more in the tone of their commander than other Generals had dared to do. Sérurier, to whom Captain and A.D.C. Marmont was now attached at his own request, now settled down for a regular siege; batteries were established, and it was believed that the place would soon be taken, when, on the 29th July, Bonaparte informed him that he was forced to prepare for a retreat; the unemployed ordnance was to be sent to the rear, the bridge over the Oglio, by which the division might have to retreat, was to be inspected, and the batteries, if ready, were to open on the citadel immediately, to try to get the fort even if withdrawal were necessary. Then on the 31st July Bonaparte from Roverbella ordered him to raise the siege; the heavy guns were to be buried, and the ammunition destroyed; the brigades at the Favorita and Saint-Georges, that is, the troops on the north and east, were to rejoin Augereau, from whom they had been detached; and the division was to retire westward for the bridge

<sup>1</sup> Bourrienne (French ed.), iii. 284-6; English ed. of 1885, i. 319-20, reading Masséna for Reille; *Bourrienne et ses erreurs*, i. 310-12.

of Marcaria over the Oglio. Wurmser had come down and Bonaparte had to fight for his life. Opening a heavy cannonade on Mantua till 10 p.m. on the 31st July, after which the infantry fired till eleven, the division withdrew, leaving to the Austrians, in the trenches 40 guns, only some of which had been spiked, and in the park 139 pieces of all sorts.<sup>1</sup> Reaching Marcaria early on the 1st August, the division remained there, keeping back the garrison of Mantua, until the 4th August. Here let me explain about the command of this division, over which there is much confusion. Sérurier fell ill and handed over the command to Gardanne on the 1st August, and that General took the division to Castiglione, the advanced-guard being under Fiorella, who is often named as in charge of the whole division. After the battle on the 5th August Bonaparte placed Fiorella temporarily in command; but that officer too fell ill, as so many of the division from Mantua did, and on the 10th August Sahuguet, then commanding at Milan, was given the division; but Lascalette seems to have taken charge on the 9th until Sahuguet actually joined on the 15th, on which date too, Sérurier, partly recovered, was sent to command at Leghorn.<sup>2</sup>

The Castiglione campaign of 1796 can for my purposes be dealt with in no more detail than may be followed on an ordinary atlas. At the end of July 1796 the Armée d'Italie lay at the southern end of Lago di Garda, covering the siege of Mantua and ready to meet an attack by the Austrians, now under the old Wurmser, who had brought 20,000 men from the Rhine. Masséna, in whose division Victor and Joubert led brigades and where served Lieut.-Colonel Suchet's regiment, the 18th, guarded the eastern side of the lake, with Augereau on his right on the Adige. Despinos was at Peschiera, to the south of the lake,<sup>3</sup> and Sauret at Salò, to the west of it. The cavalry, under Kilmaine, was at Valeggio. Bonaparte was at Brescia with his

<sup>1</sup> Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 135. Sérurier did not cross the Po by the bridge at San Benedetto as stated by Augereau (Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 461-2), but he was ordered to cut it: *Corr. Nap.* i, No. 813. See Delavoye, *Graham*, 123, as to the ignorance of the garrison of the raising of the siege.

<sup>2</sup> Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 159. Sahuguet was General of Division; the others were only Generals of Brigade.

<sup>3</sup> *Corr. Nap.* xxix. 129. Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 121-2. Napoleon puts Despinos on the Adige, at and below Verona, but the division, re-formed, had been moved when Wurmser began his attack, see *Corr. Nap.* i. Nos. 788-9. I place head-quarters where it was on 28-29th July. *Corr. Nap.* i. Nos. 792-5.



staff, but Murat was ill with fever caught at Mantua. Colonel Lannes was either in command of the grenadiers guarding headquarters or in Dallemagne's brigade, which had been employed for the moment before Mantua but which rejoined Masséna when the siege was raised.

On the 29th June 1796 Wurmser began his march southward through Italy to relieve Mantua, having left the Rhine on the 18th. His centre, under his personal leadership, 46,937 strong, came down the Adige and forced Masséna back. Joubert's men did not behave very well—so that he was anxious about his reception by Bonaparte—but he was well supported by Victor, the 18th Regiment being heavily engaged. No doubt the forcing back of Masséna was an unpleasant surprise. 'I have never', wrote that General, 'seen the Austrians fight with such rage: they were all drunk with brandy. Our men, though with empty bellies, have fought with surprising courage. If you send me 7,000 to 8,000 reinforcements I can almost promise you to reoccupy the Corona to-morrow.' This retirement was bad, but a more serious event was that on the west of the lake. Quasdanowich, with 17,620 men, threw back Sauret from Salò. Head-quarters quitted Brescia, leaving but a very small force there, when one of the Austrian columns took that place and captured a good many sick officers, amongst them being Murat. Sauret, a gallant old officer,<sup>1</sup> made a fine resistance, and, though badly aided by Despinois, who had been sent to his support, kept back the enemy; but the line of communication was cut, and the first thing to do was to secure it again. (This was when Sérurier was called off from Mantua to Marcaria to hold the bridge over the Oglio, on the 31st July.) Bonaparte brought Masséna and Augereau westward and himself came to the centre of the army, slipping away from Wurmser who, crossing the Adige, moved rather slowly by Castelnovo for Valeggio with the mass of his troops. Quasdanowich, with the west, or right, fortunately made his attacks by separate columns, so that Sauret was able to retake Salò, while Despinois had held Lonato. Relief for them was at hand, for on the 1st August Augereau, coming from Roverbella, marched through Montechiaro for Brescia. An old trooper, liking to put himself at the

<sup>1</sup> Phipps, iii. 174-6, &c. He had fought in the Seven Years' War, and with 'Pyrénées Orientales'.

head of his horse, as in later years he careered over the ground at the head of the depot of the Mamelukes at Melun,<sup>1</sup> Augereau led his cavalry on Brescia and retook the place so suddenly that the enemy were not able to carry off their prisoners. Murat thus found himself released; he seems to have given his *parole*, but still he says he did not quit Bonaparte, who reached the town much reassured as to the fate of the campaign. Berthier had been left for a moment in rear, and we find Bonaparte from Montechiaro on the 29th July writing that he awaited Berthier and his staff with impatience, but Berthier rejoined him safely on the 30th at Castelnovo. Augereau, leaving Masséna to follow up the right of the enemy, now fell back to the south-east, to meet Wurmser if he should advance to the support of Quasdanowich.

Now came the crisis of the campaign. Wurmser, having turned the lake, was moving westwards, his leading troops approaching Castiglione, while Quasdanowich, having come down the western side of the lake, was trying to get round its southern end to join him. Bonaparte had succeeded in getting the divisions of Sauret, Despinos, Masséna, and Augereau, with the cavalry of Kilmaine, between the two bodies of Austrians. Could he check one, or both, sufficiently to give him time to concentrate against either? The answer was given on the 2nd August 1796 in what is called the battle of Lonato, but which really was a series of severe combats, in which the slackness of Wurmser's advance enabled Augereau to check him at Castiglione, whilst on the west the scattered columns of Quasdanowich were thrown back far enough to enable Bonaparte to concentrate against Wurmser. We have first to deal with the part played by Masséna against Quasdanowich. Salò had been reoccupied by the enemy, and Sauret advanced northwards against it, whilst Despinos on his left moved for Gavardo, but was driven back. Meantime Masséna stood at Lonato, a little to the south-west of the lake, to close the road of junction with Wurmser. The first blow of the column which struck him threw back his advanced troops, but then the Austrians, apt, as Clausewitz says, to try to reap before they had sown, spread out to get round his flanks, whereupon he formed Victor's brigade, the 18th

<sup>1</sup> Leroy, *Ville de Melun: La Caserne Augereau*, Melun, Huguernin, 1906. (See pp. 208-9.)

and the 32nd Regiments, ready for attack. Bonaparte had addressed the latter regiment, telling them not to fire but to dash on without minding the enemy's skirmishers: 'Bayonets only; sound the charge; band, play a patriotic march, and you, 32nd, maintain your glorious reputation.' Lonato was retaken at the first rush and the Austrians were driven back on Desenzano, part going east for the Mincio and the rest retreating westward, to fall into the hands of the French towards Salo. Bonaparte himself was present, with Berthier and Junot, and, apparently, Murat. That night Bonaparte slept at a small house belonging to the Zambelli family, about a mile and a quarter from Lonato, half-way up the hill facing Desenzano. Masséna had had to threaten to burn Desenzano in order to force the inhabitants to supply the cavalry with forage. At Lonato itself the population had been greatly excited by a Dragoon having thrust his sword through an inhabitant, but General Victor, having inquired into this, reported that as both men had been drunk, and as the Dragoon's Republican patriotism had been provoked, no punishment was required.

In the meantime, while the French were engaged with Quasdanowich, what was Wurmser doing? The fiery old Marshal was carrying out a plan unsuited to him. At first Colonel Zach had proposed that a mass of 40,000 men should march down the Adige straight for Mantua, whilst heads of columns showed themselves on each flank to bewilder the French, and this thunderbolt style would have fitted Wurmser well enough; but Colonel Dukka had sufficient influence to get his own plan, the main outlines of which we have seen, adopted instead, and this neither the Marshal, nor, it would seem, his staff, was capable of carrying out. Once fairly in the plain at the foot of the lake Wurmser should have sacrificed everything in order to make the junction with Quasdanowich, but, apparently puzzled by the disappearance of the French from his own front, he hung in the wind and wasted valuable time, although he was aware that Quasdanowich was engaged, and, a bad omen, that the firing heard towards Salo seemed to grow more distant. It is generally assumed that the Marshal wasted time also by actually marching on Mantua, not believing that the siege was raised, but we know his movements through the report of Colonel Graham, the future Lord Lynedoch, who was to meet one French General



now employed here, Victor, in later years at Barossa, and whose red coat gave such annoyance to the Austrian General Melas.<sup>1</sup> On the 31st July Wurmser reached Castelnovo, where Bonaparte had slept the night before, and, as I have already said, firing at a gradually increasing distance was heard from towards Lonato and Salo. Here he heard that the siege of Mantua had been raised, and he moved on westwards to Valeggio on the Mincio, whilst Graham and an Austrian officer, Colonel Vincent, rode into Mantua and then returned to Wurmser at Valeggio. Now was the moment to strain every nerve to call off the French from Quasdanowich, for not a Frenchman was in touch with the Marshal's force, but instead Wurmser remained all the 31st July and also the 1st August at Valeggio, about sixteen miles from Lonato, leaving on the 2nd August to march south to Goito, that is, away from Quasdanowich. It was only on the 3rd August that the march to the north-west on Castiglione was begun. In other words Wurmser gave the French several days to deal with Quasdanowich, and then to turn on himself. This was clumsy work, and fatal before such a General as Bonaparte. Instead of coming on the French rear whilst it was engaged with Quasdanowich, he found Augereau formed ready to contest his advance. It is just possible that Wurmser may have gone himself to Mantua, but, if so, it must have been after hearing that the siege was raised, and so against all light. I now pass to the French force which he came on under Augereau in front of Castiglione, a place which Colonel Zach, arriving with a small escort, found occupied by the French.<sup>2</sup>

The troops of the French divisions had been so mixed in the scramble to get between the two great bodies of the enemy that a fresh distribution of them had had to be made, but now the army may be taken to have thrown its right back a quarter-circle, pivoting on its left, so that Masséna and Augereau were to the south, instead of the east, of Sauret at Salo. Sérurier was almost in line at Marcaria to the south.<sup>3</sup> When Masséna had been brought up it was uncertain whether he would have to face the troops of Wurmser or of Quasdanowich, but he and

<sup>1</sup> Delavoye, *Graham*, 121-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 122-4. Compare *Corr. Nap.* i, Nos. 809-15, for the movements of Bonaparte.

<sup>3</sup> The changes in command of this division are explained on p. 62, but for convenience it is referred to as Sérurier's (E. A. S.).

Sauret had been practically facing to the rear. Augereau on the other hand, on the 3rd August, facing eastwards, had to meet the leading troops of Wurmser, advancing to join Quasdanovich, whose progress was all the quicker as the rear-guard of Augereau's division, under Valette, had evacuated Castiglione, to the fury of Bonaparte who had intended the town to be held. Coming to see Augereau on the afternoon of the 2nd August, he burst out at Valette; 'Ce ne fut plus un homme, c'était un diable,' says Landrieux, who came in for his share of the blame.<sup>1</sup> Then, leaving Marmont, at his own request, with Augereau, Bonaparte rode back to rejoin Masséna, with whom we have seen him at Lonato. As Castiglione was to be the scene of a more important battle two days later, a description of it may be given. It is built on a plateau some 264 feet above the plain, facing towards Montechiaro on the north-west and towards Solferino on the south-east. Two hours' drive takes one there from Lonato, where Masséna had been fighting. 'It is a strategical point of great importance, for the town is flanked by rocks pyramidical in shape, which form so many formidable advanced redoubts.' The town itself, of 5,000 people, remains as it probably was in 1796, with small houses and narrow, winding streets. The plain below, soon to be the scene where most of the fight of the 5th August was waged, is now well cultivated but was then, according to local tradition, open ground, uncultivated, and forming a field for the manœuvres of the Austrian cavalry. Above this, 'seen from the plain, at Lonato, Castiglione rises like an imposing fortress, an impregnable eagle's nest'.<sup>2</sup>

Here, on the 3rd August 1796, while Masséna was engaged at Lonato, Augereau fought what I may call his battle of Castiglione, in contrast to the better known one of the same name won two days later by Bonaparte. This was the best day of Augereau's life, and the one which twelve years later was to make him Duc de Castiglione. Advancing eastward from Montechiaro he attacked Wurmser, who held the *château* of Castiglione on the hills in front, in rear of which Augereau had at midnight on the 2nd pushed out a body which lay in ambush.

<sup>1</sup> Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 474. For Valette, see *Nap. Corr. Italie*, i. 452, 464. He was reinstated later, but Thiébault, ii. 217, describes him in 1798 as not 'un homme de guerre'.

<sup>2</sup> Trolard, *Montenotte*, 415-16. For woodcut see *ibid.* 413, and for one of Solferino see *ibid.* *Rivoli*, 237, *Tableaux historiques*, 36.

The struggle throughout the day was most severe and almost all the leaders of his division were killed or wounded. Dissatisfied with the manner in which his artillery was handled, he asked Lieut.-Colonel Marmont to command it, which that officer did to his satisfaction, although Marmont cannot have had much experience in actually handling field guns. The *château* was taken but, pressing on for the main point of the heights, Augereau found his men lying down utterly exhausted, for not a drop of water could be obtained on the thirsty plain they had advanced over. Dismounting and drawing his sword, an example followed by 'le brave Marmont', he led them on and took the position, the enemy retiring to their last post in front of the Solferino tower. The victory had been important, for Wurmser had failed to reach Quasdanowich, and his troops had fought well: never, says Marmont, had they been routed. The French loss had been heavy, especially amongst the senior officers. Indeed Graham, a fair judge, who was with Wurmser during the day, says it passed 'without any advantage gained by either side', although he, but apparently not Wurmser, understood the importance of the time which the French had gained.

For reasons which will be seen farther on, it is well to understand the state of mind of Augereau on the night of his victory. As Napoleon says, he was generally despondent after a battle, and the two letters we have from him to Bonaparte, written after his battle of Castiglione, prove this. In the first he speaks fairly enough of what he has done; he praises Marmont, who could not have acted better during the whole combat: 'he has displayed great military talents'; he asks for officers, particularly for Colonel Lannes, who, he said, had a commission to command the 4th Regiment: without him that 'brave troupe' is lost. 'It is necessary to profit by this victory.' In the second he is not so cheerful, for the enemy were posted close to him, from 15,000 to 20,000 men, and next day he would be attacked by fresh troops, superior in number to his. Unless he receives more troops he cannot resist, and he asks for instructions in case he be obliged to retreat. All this was natural enough after his personal exertions; and the more so as when returning to his quarters he found all the men of the artillery park flying in confusion and spreading terror amongst the troops, having been attacked by some 200 Hussars who came suddenly on



their rear. Next morning, however, Bonaparte arrived, no doubt with Berthier, Murat, and Bessières, radiant after beating off Quasdanowich, and, embracing Augereau, congratulated him on his success. He ordered the division to be given a rest to prepare for the work still before them. 'This day', he wrote at Saint Helena, 'was the finest in the life of that General' (Augereau). 'Napoleon never since wished to forget it.' Leaving Augereau on the field, Bonaparte went back with his staff to Lonato to arrange for bringing up as many troops as possible for the next day, and then occurred the curious incident so often described. The Austrians to the west of the lake were formed into so many columns, and these had been so scattered, that it was hard to know where they might appear; and Masséna, when sending most of his troops northwards for Salo on the 4th August, had got alarmed about the safety of Lonato and had sent back Victor to take post on the heights to the left of the place, with part of the 18th (Suchet's) and the 32nd Regiment. As Bonaparte reached Lonato, a column of Austrians some 2,000 strong, part of Quasdanowich's wing trying to get round the lake and to join Wurmser, also arrived, and summoned the town, where the French head-quarters was only guarded by 300 men, not including Victor's brigade. Victor received the officer bearing the summons roughly enough, but Bonaparte had him brought before him and, announcing that the summons was a personal insult to himself, gave the force eight minutes to surrender or they would get no quarter. Taken by surprise, and disheartened by their previous wanderings, the Austrians surrendered, thus saving the French much trouble as their total strength on the spot was but 1,500 men.<sup>1</sup>

The 4th August passed at Castiglione with hardly a shot fired, as the French were bringing up as many troops as possible to throw back Wurmser; Masséna's division arrived after much marching, and that of Despinois, or part of it, was sent later towards the Austrian right wing. Thus Bonaparte was using the troops that had thrown back Quasdanowich northwards, to halt Wurmser in his march westwards to join Quasdanowich.

<sup>1</sup> *Corr. Nap.* i, pp. 523-4; *ibid.* xxix. 135; Roguet, i. 265-7; Pelleport, i. 55-6; Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 147-9; Marmont, i. 207-8; Berthier in *Campagne du Général Buonaparte*, 113. See the discussion of the various reports of this incident by Trolard, *Montenotte*, 398-408.

Wurmser did not at all realize the situation: he had guessed from the resistance of the French that Quasdanowich had suffered a severe defeat, and had, therefore, sent him orders to join him by marching round the upper end of the lake, an operation which would have taken four days. Meantime he remained in the accidental position which circumstances had obliged him to take up, waiting for Quasdanowich before renewing the battle. Apparently he assumed that the French would wait also, or that he could beat off their whole force, and he does not seem to have tried to concentrate all the troops he could. He had placed his right at the tower of Solferino (on which the French in 1853 were to advance), and his left on a redoubt on the mound of Medolano, so that his line stretched obliquely from the hills into the plain, facing, say, about north-west. Bonaparte brought Augereau down from the hills into the plain on his right, to face the left of Wurmser, whilst Masséna's troops, who had done an immense amount of marching, acted against the right of the enemy. Despinos had not yet come up. All the Horse Artillery was placed under Lieut.-Colonel and A.D.C. Marmont, and took post with the cavalry on the right of Augereau.

Sérurier's division all this time had been left in the south at Marcaria and had kept back an advance against it attempted by the left wing, or 4th column, of the Austrians, under Meszaros, with 4,017 men from Mantua; thus preventing Meszaros joining Wurmser as he was ordered to do, a fact which seems forgotten or overlooked by Marmont when he blames the detachment of Sérurier. Now on the 4th August 1796 he was ordered up, at first only to take post at Pontevico, and, apparently later, he was directed on the left rear of Wurmser.<sup>1</sup> Had Wurmser simply called up Meszaros that General could have got up sooner than Sérurier,<sup>2</sup> or had he been able to drive Sérurier before him the two would have joined the fight at Castiglione as Ney drove Lestocq on Eylau in 1807, but at an earlier hour in the day. Now Fortune played Sérurier a scurvy trick. That General was but a little behind Masséna, and perhaps Augereau, in credit; hitherto in this campaign the

<sup>1</sup> *Corr. Nap.* i, No. 830 (there is no order given except this). *Ibid.* xxiv. 135; Koch, *Masséna*, ii, 149-51; Jomini, *Rev.* viii. 328.

<sup>2</sup> He had a shorter route by Rivalta.

other two had played the prominent part, but on the 5th August his division was to strike the telling blow and give the 'coup de Jarnac'. Had Sérurier led his men this day he would have been known as the winner of the battle, and in due time would probably have become Duc de Solferino. Unfortunately at this critical point of his career the fever caught in front of Mantua incapacitated him, and as we have seen, in reply to Bonaparte's order he explained that he had had to leave for Cremona and thence for Piacenza, and had handed over the division to Gardanne.<sup>1</sup> We may take it that he gave his successor full instructions, for the march was conducted with great skill and courage. It is not an easy task to place yourself in rear of an enemy who may turn and crush you before you can be supported, and we shall see the failure in enterprise of a General hazard the fate of the battle at Rivoli; while on the other hand the too fiery Ney, sent on a similar errand at Bautzen, was diverted from the enemy's rear by his haste to engage them. Nominally the division was 7,000 strong, but some 300 of them, struck by fever like Sérurier, had to be left at Marcaria with the engineers, the siege-labourers, and the wagons of the siege-train.

On the 5th August this campaign was decided by the battle of Castiglione, which, as it was conducted by Bonaparte, I have but to sketch. Till the approach of Sérurier's division was assured the French had to play a waiting game, and the two divisions in front of the Austrians, Masséna and Augereau, made but feigned attacks, Bonaparte drawing them back to fix the attention of Wurmser on them. By six in the morning the advanced-guard of Sérurier's division, under Fiorella, having marched all night, was at Guidizzolo, that is in rear of the Austrian line which slanted from Solferino to the south-west across the plain. Now came the moment to secure the junction. To face the heavier ordnance of the enemy Marmont had to bring up his guns to close quarters, and having to pass a narrow defile, he launched his battery, two guns abreast, at full gallop to get clear through. The fire of the enemy crushed the head of his column but the rest got through safely, and, coming into action, dismounted some half of the guns in the redoubt, which was taken, whilst Beaumont, in command of the cavalry, swept

<sup>1</sup> See p. 62 and note 2.



round by San Cassiano. Wurmser was completely surprised by the arrival of the division of Sérurier, which the Austrians believed had been sent on the lower Adige to oppose the advance of their left, and then, recrossing at Legnago, to have marched by Mantua, keeping to the south of it. At first he wished to stand his ground, but at last it was resolved to throw back the left from the plain and to place it *en potence* on the hills, at right angles to the front, to cover a retreat eastwards. The advance of the French cavalry, and Marmont's cannonade, however, threw the retiring battalions into confusion, and the absence of any regular road prevented the guns being brought off. Bonaparte now threw Masséna and Augereau on the enemy's front, whilst the troops of Despinois, coming from Brescia, began to turn their right, which, looking down from the hills on to their left, considered the retreat of that wing to be a signal for them also to withdraw. Falling into confusion, and abandoning all their baggage and most of their artillery, the Austrians made eastwards for Valeggio. The ground was not favourable for pursuit and the French were exhausted by their many long marches, so that Wurmser got across the Mincio with less loss than one would have expected.

In fact the immediate results were not as great as one might have supposed from the position of the French, and Jomini suggests that Bonaparte might have done more by bringing Augereau to support the right, that is southwards; but, as he admits, it was important not to let Wurmser have a chance of slipping round to the north of the army and rejoining Quasdanovich. In reality, however, this is but paper criticism: the fact was that the men were exhausted by their long marches and repeated combats, as will be seen if one follows the movements of, say, the 32nd Regiment. This consideration must be kept in mind throughout the succeeding operations. After the final retreat of the enemy 'we were worn out by fatigue and unable to pursue', says Roguet. Pelleport, in a regiment of the same brigade (Victor's) as Roguet, describes the end of this battle: 'The French army, harassed by marches day and night, pursued the enemy but gently,' and he consequently regained the Mincio without suffering much loss. Marmont, who had been continuously on horseback during the eight days of the campaign, and who had been without sleep for five days except for

a few minutes by chance, says that no fatigue could be compared with his, and when at last Bonaparte let him rest he slept for twenty-two hours right off, waking quite fresh. Still, he may have ridden less than some of the men had marched and he was only twenty-two; Berthier, who was almost forty-three, wrote to Salicetti, 'For eight days we have been on horseback; our horses are dead with fatigue, and we are worn out physically but quite fresh mentally.' Judge what the exhaustion of the men must have been; and Bonaparte himself attributes the safe withdrawal of the Austrians to the fatigue of his own troops. But besides all this, the stout old Wurmser, although no strategist, was a fine and resolute fighter, and such men have a knack of avoiding the ruin threatened by fine science.

This battle of Castiglione is the more interesting, at least to men of my generation, as in 1859 the French under Louis Napoleon again won a victory on much the same ground, although in a simpler combat. In most accounts the reader may be confused by the two fights at Castiglione, and it would have been simpler if Napoleon had named the battle of the 5th August from Solferino, the tower of which, the 'Spia dell'Italia', was one of the main points of the day: indeed, we find General Despinois writing of 'the battle of Solferino'. Louis Napoleon so named his victory of 1859, but that duplication would not have caused the confusion created by including the first fight at Castiglione on the 3rd August under the name of Lonato, as is so often done.

I now come to what I call the Augereau myth. According to that General, whose tale is supported, except in certain details, by Landrieux and is practically adopted by Koch, the success of the campaign was due to him. At 3 p.m. in the afternoon of the 31st July Bonaparte with his staff arrives at Roverbella, where Augereau already is. A conversation takes place in which Bonaparte asks what should be done to save the army, and Augereau, telling Berthier, who believes he does not know the positions of the enemy, that it is no longer phrases which are wanted, proceeds to deliver several phrases: he will not retreat, but will rather perish at the head of his men. The only proposal he makes is that he intends to start for Brescia. Bonaparte says he must raise the siege of Mantua; Augereau combats this, but the siege is raised on the night of the 31st and Sérurier is

ordered by Bonaparte to pass the Po at San Benedetto.<sup>1</sup> Then, meeting Bonaparte again at daybreak at Castiglione, Augereau marches on, clears Brescia, and with a great many of the Generals proceeds to head-quarters. Bonaparte asks the Generals whether they think it best to retreat to the other side of the Po, and, rallying the army, to remain on the defensive, or to attack with the few troops they have. Most of the Generals advise retreat but Augereau declares for fighting, finally telling them, 'You can make your retreat as far as Paris: I shall not oppose it. As for me, I swear I shall not do so'; whereupon he goes off to rest on his bed till called to come to Bonaparte at 2 a.m. on the morning of the 2nd August. Bonaparte, all dishevelled, tells him that the council has decided nothing, but that he agrees to fight; Augereau shall march on Montechiaro—say Castiglione—and Bonaparte will move with Masséna on Lonato, Sauret retaking Salò. Arrived by Montechiaro, Augereau finds that General Valette has abandoned Castiglione, and Bonaparte, arriving with his staff at 4 p.m., tells him that part of Valette's troops have gone back as far as San Marco, west of Lonato, and says, 'Ainsi, tu vois qu'il faut effectuer absolument notre retraite.' Augereau reassures him, saying that his officers and men talk only of fighting, and the two visit the troops and find them enthusiastic. Finally Bonaparte, having suspended Valette in the presence of the troops, goes off to Brescia leaving everything for the 3rd August to the wisdom of Augereau, and promising to send him the cavalry at 2 a.m. next day. On the day after the battle of the 3rd August Bonaparte arrives, and, throwing himself on the neck of Augereau, says, 'You were right; I recognized yesterday my true friends.' This account of Augereau's was written in August 1814, and was meant to be but the first chapter in his 'Mémoires'. Perhaps the events of 1815 may have made him hesitate to continue his boasts. He wrote on paper stamped with the head of the Emperor, 'left in his hands like the dress of Dejanira'. His account was not published until nearly twenty years after his death, that is, in 1834.

Landrieux, then Chief of the Staff to the cavalry division of

<sup>1</sup> No order to cross the Po was given to Sérurier, who was directed to burn the bridge at San Benedetto if the line of the Mincio had to be abandoned, *Corr. Nap.* i, No. 812. See note 1 on p. 62 of this volume.



Kilmaine, puts the matter more strongly. Whilst Bonaparte at the interview with Augereau at Montechiaro on the 2nd August was storming at the abandonment of Castiglione by Valette, General Kilmaine tells him that it is useless to profess to be angry; that they, the Generals, had given orders since leaving Verona, as they recognized that he was incapable of giving any; that he had preferred the reports of the Venetians and of the Venetian ladies to theirs. Then they ascend a hill and find that Bonaparte is right in asserting that the enemy are not near. Augereau asks what is to be done. Bonaparte says, to await news of Masséna and Sauret; Sérurier would join them next day,<sup>1</sup> and then they would establish their line with the right on the Adda, and retake the offensive. Augereau is all for fighting the Austrian division coming from the east, but Bonaparte still says he prefers to decamp and march on Pizzighettone and Lodi. All the Generals, however, approve the plan of Augereau (in Augereau's tale they agree with Bonaparte). Bonaparte says he washes his hands of it and will go away. 'Who is to command?' asks Augereau; 'You,' replies Bonaparte, and goes off. Augereau says he is not the senior and tells Kilmaine he has not his capacity. However, all urge him to command and he does so, with the result we know.

I put this story aside as a mere myth. In the first place, it is in opposition to all we know of the characters of Bonaparte and Augereau. In the next place, there is no consistency in the narrative even of Koch, who is generally a careful writer. For example, Koch finishes one page by relating how Augereau, having been left in command by Bonaparte on the 2nd August, proceeds to make his arrangements for the stand he intends to make;<sup>2</sup> the success of this depended on others, but Koch never gives us a word more of these arrangements, going on to recount those, sensible enough, made by Bonaparte; while we know that Kilmaine, whose 'attitude froide' is contrasted with that of Augereau, and who promises his aid, for some unexplained reason does not join his friend on the field till late next day. Let me remark here that when Koch speaks of all the Generals agreeing with Augereau, even supposing that Kilmaine were really

<sup>1</sup> On the 31st July Sérurier was ordered to raise the siege and to march to Marcaria, not to Montechiaro; *Corr. Nap.* i, No. 813.

<sup>2</sup> Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 140-1, 462-7, 474-6.

present the other commanders of divisions, Masséna, Sauret, and Despinos, were certainly far away, and they would have had something to say about the command being given to Augereau. If this, however, means that Augereau was to command at the first battle of Castiglione, who else was there? It was his division and there was no reason for any question on the subject. Then Bonaparte is made to tell him that Sérurier will join him next day, that is, on the 3rd August, whilst the order for Sérurier to leave Marcaria was only given on the 4th August, apparently at 8 a.m. Further, it is acknowledged that the attitude of Bonaparte was not at all that of a man cowed by the opposition of the officers with Augereau: he cashiered Valette although that officer was supported by Augereau, and threatens to shoot Landrieux, a thing one regrets he did not do. It would be tedious to point out the mass of inconsistencies in the different accounts given by Koch: take for instance that of the scene of the suspension of General Valette.<sup>1</sup> The fact is that the peculiarity of the situation required that the whole operation should be directed by one hand; the victory of Augereau at the first battle of Castiglione would have been of little use without that of Masséna at Lonato, and the way in which the divisions were hurled, now west, now east, could not have been the work of separate independent commanders. It is never suggested that Augereau gave orders to, or even asked for help from, Masséna. But putting all this aside, what is to be said of the silence of Marmont on the subject? He must have been with Bonaparte at the interview with Augereau on the night of the 2nd August; he was left with that General, and fought with him. He criticizes Bonaparte now for the absence of Sérurier, later for numerous errors; in 1814 no tie, however strong, prevented him betraying his benefactor when he believed it advantageous—say to the State—for him to do so. Why has he not a word to say of the intention to retreat, only stopped by Augereau? He does criticize, first, as I have said, the position in which Sérurier was kept till the 4th August, and then the narrow space in which the drama was played, so that the least check must have been fatal, but then he also says of the campaign: 'A model of vigour and activity, it is remarkable for the plan adopted and followed. To profit by the

<sup>1</sup> Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 140, 465, 467, 474.

mistake made by the enemy in dividing their forces, to place oneself in the centre with an army inferior in numbers, so as to present in succession the same soldiers to combat different corps . . . behold a prodigious achievement.' Then, dwelling on the dangers of the position, he ends: 'To tell the truth, with the energy with which the troops were then penetrated, the superhuman activity, the talents, and the resolution of the chief, everything was possible and could be attempted.'

The state of mind in which the first battle of Castiglione left Augereau, to which I have referred, is utterly inconsistent with the myth. Such a braggart of a man, having been successful in the first step proposed by him, against the opinion of his commander, would never have adopted that attitude, humbly asking for orders and ready to retreat. Rather it would have been, 'See how right I was! Now do so-and-so'. And the real Kilmaine on the 5th August writes to Bonaparte from Montechiaro that, 'The total extinction of my strength prevents me, my dear General, from joining you and sharing your glory'. Thus the General who is represented as believing Bonaparte to have lost his head at the beginning of the campaign, so that his Generals had to act instead of him, speaks of his 'glory' even before the final battle of Castiglione, and when the first battle there, according to the myth, had but shown how much better Augereau knew what to do. To any one acquainted with men of the stamp of Augereau, a not uncommon type, the explanation is simple enough. Accustomed always to think of what would happen in case of defeat, Bonaparte, then young in command, would naturally speak to his Generals of the chances of the campaign and of the line of retreat if it were necessary to retire; but his own resolution, no doubt, was what he told the Directory on the 2nd August when at Brescia: 'If I resolve to repass the Adda, in order to cover the Milanese, it will only be after having done everything possible to merit your confidence and that of the brave army whose command you have given me.' Augereau, when consulted, to do him justice would be all for fighting and would be indignant at the idea of retreat, for he was confident enough before a battle. Such men always believe they sway an assembly, and he would be firmly convinced that it was he alone who had prevented what was a mere hypothesis (retreat) from being effected. With his temperament it was also natural



that after the first battle, successful though it was, he could think of retreat without a protest. This is different enough from the attitude of Bonaparte, who, writing on the 2nd August to the Commissioner Salicetti, says: 'I shall seize the first occasion to deliver battle to the enemy: it will decide the fate of Italy. Beaten, I shall retire to the Adda, victorious, I shall not stop at the marsh of Mantua.' One can almost hear Augereau exclaim on hearing this: 'What, retreat? I will die rather; I will fight, &c.'

As for Landrieux, can we take a man seriously who asks us to believe that he, an Adjutant-General of cavalry, could have made himself sovereign of the North of Italy in 1797? Bonaparte and his staff would have been lodged in a fortress; some money given to Masséna, flattery and some cash to Augereau, 'bonnes raisons', doubtless of sterling value, to Kilmaine, Victor, Sérurier, and Joubert, promotion to Guieu, and a few crowns to the A.D.C. of Dallemagne, which would have attached these 'braves' to him! In a word, one of the stablemen thought he could ride Bucephalus. No wonder a man capable of such visions should misunderstand the character of Bonaparte. And he is forgetful enough: what, he asks, 'would have prevented me doing as Lahoz did under Brune in Italy?' Nothing, indeed, for Lahoz got himself shot!<sup>1</sup> The whole Augereau account is a myth, in which even Barras, apt to believe evil, put little trust.

Having disposed of Augereau's pretensions we must return and follow the last stages of the campaign. The French had formed up after Castiglione as follows: Augereau on the left, then Kilmaine, then Masséna, with Sérurier's division on the right.<sup>2</sup> On the 6th August the army advanced, Masséna making for Peschiera where a small force of the French under Guillaume still held out. Arriving early next day, Masséna placed the 18th at the head, and, marching through the town, attacked the enemy's entrenchments. The men had to filter through a narrow postern, but at last Victor led them on the works. Twice they were beaten off; the enemy's cavalry, 'avec une rare intrépidité', charged the 18th, driving them off the road, and as the Austrian

<sup>1</sup> Landrieux, i. 365-72. See also *ante*, p. 59, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> The arrangement seems odd, but see Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 154 and Jomini, *Atlas*, 33, and plate xxii.

infantry, coming out of their works, joined in, the regiment was almost thrown into the Mincio. 'Here again,' says Pelleport, who was with them, 'it was demonstrated to us that the 18th, so intrepid before infantry, lost countenance before cavalry.' Then Masséna brought up a Dragoon regiment and the 32nd, with the rest of the division, when at last the Austrians, out-flanked, retired, but apparently not till nightfall. The struggle had been severe, as it was all-important for the enemy to hold the place in order to secure their retreat. 'General Victor, at the head of the 18th Regiment,' Bonaparte reported to the Directory, 'showed the greatest bravery at the combat of Peschiera.' At Saint Helena he wrote that Colonel Suchet commanded the 18th: Suchet was only Lieut.-Colonel and, except by some chance, could hardly have been in command. Bonaparte himself led Sérurier's division, which on the 5th August he had placed under Fiorella (Gardanne, who had brought it up for Castiglione, having perhaps fallen ill), and, passing apparently through Peschiera, marched on Verona, whose gates he blew open at ten o'clock on the night of the 7th August. Augereau, unable to cross the Mincio lower down, followed through Peschiera, and was placed at Verona, while Masséna retook his position between Lake Garda and the Adige. Fiorella was next sent with some caution to recommence the blockade of Mantua, but he became ill and was succeeded temporarily by another General of Brigade, Lasalcette.<sup>1</sup> On the west of the Lago di Garda Sauret and Saint-Hilaire threw back the enemy, Murat having reconnoitred northwards from Brescia.

Meanwhile Wurmser had retired at his ease up the road by the Adige, meaning to hold the line of the Mincio; first throwing fresh troops into Mantua—two whole brigades—and withdrawing the most sickly troops, for the garrison had been so reduced by illness that it could hardly furnish the necessary daily guards. Supplies of food were also poured in. Then on the 6th he had crossed the Adige by a bridge of boats to Volgaro, where he remained till the next afternoon. When marching up the river for Ala a curious affair occurred. At the Chiusa the gorge was so narrow that there was only room for the river and the road cut out of the rocks, and some French troops had got into a few houses on the opposite bank, so that it was

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 62 for successive commanders of Sérurier's division.

determined to take another way; but then the news that the French had burst through Verona made it probable that they would seize that route, and the gorge had to be risked. Readers of the interesting Thiébault will remember the vignette given by him of Napoleon in his rapid ride to Burgos in 1808, spurring his own horse while thrashing that of Savary who rode in front of him, so great was his haste. Here 'the good old Marshal' rode a common Hussar horse, his own not having come up from the Rhine, and he meant to have taken the short passage calmly, but behind him came a favourite footman in yellow livery, who, 'not wishing that the Marshal should be exposed more than necessary to the fire, kept on flogging the Marshal's horse so as to quicken its pace as much as possible'.<sup>1</sup> Getting past unhurt, Wurmser made for Trent.

While this desperate and confused struggle was being carried on at the foot of the lake, the wildest confusion had been caused in rear of the army by the first successes of the Austrian raid, and this not only amongst the civilian population. Bonaparte complained that one commissariat officer, panic-stricken, had fled across the Po, writing to every one: 'Sauve qui peut!' and getting within two leagues of Genoa: then dying of fright, and believing himself cut down by the enemy's cavalry! As for the inhabitants, in some parts they were in favour of the French, but at Florence, for example, they were ready to enjoy the triumph of Wurmser. Miot de Melito, the diplomatic agent, arriving at Florence from Rome, had much trouble to persuade the crowd which surrounded his house that he had not brought in his carriage the wounded Bonaparte, who had then died and been buried in the garden. Joséphine had had her terrors, and, if she can be trusted, she had saved Bonaparte from being captured in Brescia. He was in that town with her certainly as late as the 28th July, and the Provéditeur offered her a fête which would have involved staying on there. For some reason—instinct, according to her—she refused obstinately to stay, and they were twelve miles from the town when the Austrians, in league with the Provéditeur, entered it. This was on the 29th July and Bonaparte had left at 10 p.m. on the 28th. Next going to Castelnovo, where he certainly was on the 30th (and here her account may agree with that of Graham), her eyes,

<sup>1</sup> Delavoye, *Graham*, 129-30.



clearer than those of Bonaparte, showed her the enemy coming down the Adige. Bonaparte then sent her to the shore of the Lago di Garda, where the Austrian flotilla fired on her. Flying on horseback, she got to Peschiera, when Bonaparte sent for her to Castiglione, but, realizing the danger, told her to go under escort to Sérurier before Mantua. She tried tears, but he said, 'Take this woman away.' Then to her, 'Adieu; start; it is Wurmser with 80,000 men. But be tranquil: he shall pay for the tears he makes thee shed.' Passing before Mantua the fire of the place made her take shelter in a chapel, but a soldier got her out, when the guns shattered the building. Crossing the Po she went off for Parma. She then received a letter from Bonaparte, dated the 4th August, the day before the main battle of Castiglione, treating the defeat of Wurmser as already assured. Whatever the truth of all this, Bonaparte's action towards her is at least not in accordance with the Augereau myth. At Parma she received news of the raising of the siege of Mantua and set off in haste for Lucca and Leghorn, but after a night at Leghorn came the news of Castiglione, and going to Florence with an escort of thirty Hussars, she was received as a Sovereign.

After Castiglione certain personal changes were made in the army, some of which have an interest for us. On the 15th August Sérurier, whose health was ruined for the time being by the fever caught before Mantua, was sent to command at Leghorn; Vaubois being brought from there and given the command of the division of Sauret, who, with some civility from Bonaparte, was sent to command the reserve at Brescia as his health made the active work too much for him. Another General of Division, Baraguey d'Hilliers, just arrived from La Vendée with his A.D.C. Lavalette, was placed in command of Milan and Lombardy on the 13th August. Despinos, having displeased Bonaparte by his failure to support Sauret,<sup>1</sup> had been told by his irritated commander that he had known before that he was a thief but not till now that he was a coward; and he was sent to command at Alessandria. As for Bonaparte's staff, I think that Captain Duroc must by this time have been appointed an

<sup>1</sup> Marmont, i. 212-13; *Corr. Nap.* i, No. 845. See the defence of Despinos, Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 484-91. For Bonaparte's opinion of Despinos see p. 85 of this volume.

A.D.C., having been recommended by General Lespinasse, commanding the artillery of the army. Murat, as General of Brigade, had apparently ceased to be an A.D.C., but was employed on various expeditions in command of small columns. We may take Captain Bessières as always accompanying Bonaparte with his Guides; his name naturally would not be mentioned, but it is curious how hard it is to say where Colonel Lannes had served in this campaign, in which, except for Augereau's request for him, he is not mentioned. General of Brigade Joubert, having fought under Masséna at first, had been sent to the division of Augereau for the final battle of Castiglione. 'You must give another heave in the collar, and then we shall rest,' Bonaparte said when he arrived.<sup>1</sup> The heave was given, but Joubert considered that he had been neglected in the bulletins: 'The Generals of Division still have everything for themselves: "Sic vos, non vobis".' Sainte-Beuve thought that Masséna had slighted Joubert intentionally, but this is a mistake: on the 10th August he reported of the campaign that 'Generals Victor, Joubert, Pijon, and Rampon have shown there much capacity and bravery.' It is worth noting that Masséna asks for the promotion to Colonel of Lieut.-Colonel Charlot, commanding the 32nd Regiment, which had acted alongside of the 18th, nothing being said in this, his first report, of the 18th Regiment. As for Joubert, probably he missed mention at the battle of the 5th August because he fought in a different division to his own, each General thinking that the other would praise him. He was in command at Brescia on the 4th August, and the peremptory order to join Augereau at Castiglione shows how Bonaparte valued him. Wishing to please Berthier, Bonaparte chose that General's first A.D.C., Dutailis,<sup>2</sup> to carry to Paris the flags taken in the last campaign, and on the 27th August Dutailis was duly received by the Directory, promoted Lieut.-Colonel, and presented with a pair of pistols. This selection of Dutailis caused a burst of temper from Marmont, who, with characteristic vanity, considered that he should have been sent. He even declared to Bonaparte that such a choice was an insult

<sup>1</sup> 'Il faut encore que tu donnes un coup de collier'. Sainte-Beuve, *Causeries du Lundi*, xv, 166.

<sup>2</sup> Général Comte Adrien-Jean-Baptiste-Amable Ramond du Taillis (alias Ramond du Bosc du Taillis), (1760-1851). *Fastes*, ii, 464.

to him, and demanded to be sent to some other post where he would not receive such a humiliation. Instead of dismissing his insubordinate A.D.C., Bonaparte sent Marmont in one of the armed boats to reconnoitre the shores of the Lago di Garda, which took twelve days, and from which he returned with a cooler head. Certainly Bonaparte was not vindictive; it would have been better for him if in this instance he had been.

Brilliant as the short campaign had been, still, success had been bought dearly; and whilst all praise must be given to Bonaparte and to his army for a contest where a mistake, or such failures as occurred at Arcola, would have been fatal, the faults and follies of his adversaries must not be overlooked. Though many of the Austrian troops, presumably those that had come with Wurmser from the Rhine, had fought well, no doubt some had been bad and liable to panic, and the stiff Austrians often lost unnecessarily against the agile French manœuvres. For example, when Beaulieu had retreated up the Adige in June, three of his battalions drawn up on a dike on the left bank of the river, which was unfordable there, lost some 150 men from the fire of the French hidden amongst bushes on the other side, when a few steps back would have put them under cover. As for this campaign, Graham, who had been a close spectator, says: 'Thus in the course of little more than a week the great expectations formed from having placed a formidable body of more than 50,000 men under the command of Marshal Wurmser, were entirely destroyed by the superior military talents of his adversary, General Bonaparte. The whole French force in Italy . . . did not exceed 35,000 men, of whom probably not more than 25,000 were ever brought together to act against the Marshal, yet it is notorious that the French in every action that took place during this short campaign were greatly superior in numbers to the Austrian corps with which they had to deal.' According to the French estimate they themselves had lost 6,000 killed and wounded, besides some 4,000 prisoners; the memoirs of Desvernois show how chivalrously the enemy behaved to captured officers, and how bitter was the animosity of part of the population against the Republicans. The Austrians, by the same estimate, had 16,770 killed, wounded, and prisoners. But which side had really gained most? Clausewitz concludes



that the situation of the French had deteriorated, and this is probably the truth.<sup>1</sup> Wurmser had swept down just when Mantua was about to fall; he withdrew leaving the fortress revictualled and with a fresh garrison, and having deprived the French of their siege-train. The engineer Chasseloup-Laubat, it is true, believed that if thirty siege guns could be brought up from Milan, Tortona, and Alessandria, the place could still be taken in ten days; or a bombardment with twelve or fifteen mortars might make the capture sooner than a blockade. This certainly could have been done, but I presume that Bonaparte after this last experience was unwilling to take the risk of again losing his train, and the danger run at Arcola and at Rivoli shows that he was right. As for Clausewitz's idea that even half of Wurmser's army might have been detached against the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', this was obviously impossible, and in a few days Bonaparte was to show his ability to pounce on the whole force and to disable it. Where would he have stopped if met by only half that force?

While Jomini praises Bonaparte for his resolution in sacrificing his siege-train, Augereau, probably later, professed that this was unnecessary; and Saint-Cyr, with more justice, criticizes the original bringing up of the siege-train, when it ought to have been known that Wurmser was about to arrive. The contention of Augereau is absurd, for Wurmser would have swept Sérurier from the trenches, and the support of his division was absolutely necessary at Castiglione. More deference must be paid to Saint-Cyr, although one cannot but believe that he may have been partly influenced by the remembrance that the success of Wurmser's march was largely due to the slowness of action of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'. He did not realize how near the siege was to success; Marmont, an artillery officer, who was in the trenches, says that they had dismounted the enemy's guns and almost silenced his fire, and they were to have delivered the final assault on the 30th July. What warning did Bonaparte get of the dispatch of Wurmser from the Rhine? That General started on the 18th June with 25,000 men. On the 22nd June the Directory, writing as if some previous letter had been sent, informed Bonaparte that Wurmser had taken 20,000 men; but on the 17th July they told Bonaparte that they thought he

<sup>1</sup> Clausewitz, *Campagne de 1796* (trans. by Colin), 143-7.

exaggerated the strength of the enemy opposed to him: Moreau believed that part of the detachment had been called back to confront him. Also the Directory asserted that 10,000 men from the west or La Vendée would arrive in Italy, and one can fancy what this reinforcement meant to Bonaparte. The capture of Mantua was so important that one can believe he would risk much to gain that place. On the 21st July he heard that Wurmser's force was on the frontier of the Grisons, and all his divisions were warned in time of a possible attack. I take the opinions of Marmont, when I quote them—from his text, not from his letters—as those of the Marshal he was when he recorded them; and that he does not disapprove of the formal siege of Mantua is the more important as he proceeds to blame one thing which has passed many critics: the delay of Sérurier's division at Marcaria from the 1st to the 4th August. He says it should have been brought up to Montechiaro, and it would have secured victory at the first battle of Castiglione on the 3rd August. As it was, if Augereau had been defeated there, it would have been separated from the army. At Marcaria it certainly covered the road westward to Cremona, but such a detachment is not what one would have expected from Bonaparte, unless he believed that Wurmser might march due west from Mantua to cut him off if he stood against the column on the west of Lago di Garda.

This campaign finished, Bonaparte on the 14th August 1796 gave a sketch of his Generals of Division to the Directory, to show how few were of real use to him. 'Augereau, much character, courage, firmness, activity; accustomed to war, liked by the men, fortunate in his operations. Masséna, active, indefatigable; has audacity, insight into a situation, and promptitude in decision. Sérurier, fights like a private, takes nothing on himself, firm; has not a good enough opinion of his troops, is ill. Despinois, slack, not active, not audacious, not fit for war, not liked by the men, does not fight at their head; otherwise has elevation of mind, cleverness, and healthy political opinions; good for a command in the Interior. Sauret, good man, very good soldier, not enlightened enough to be General, rather unlucky. Abbaticucci, not fit to command fifty men; Garnier, Meunier, Casabianca,<sup>1</sup> incapable, not fit to command a battalion

<sup>1</sup> Meunier was Colonel of Sérurier's regiment, the 70th Médoc, in January

in a war as active and as serious as this. Macquard, a brave man, no talents, quick-tempered.' For the staff, Berthier (who of course read this), 'talents, activity, courage, character: everything in his favour. Gaultier' (who had been Chief of the Staff to Schérer and who acted as a sort of second to Berthier), 'good at office work, has never served in war.' All this was true enough, and Thiébault tells us what Casabianca was. The remarks on Despinos are odd, coming from a General who had just stigmatized him as a thief and a coward, but they are rather characteristic of Bonaparte, who was almost always careful in dealing with men of what then were 'principes politiques sains', that is, thorough Republicans. Bonaparte added that he was bringing up Vaubois and Sahuguet, who had done well in commands in rear; but Despinos, who had done well at Milan, had been very bad at the head of a division, and he would judge them after their works. The Directory replied in the spirit of a War Office clerk that they would deal with this when he told them about the Generals of Brigade and the Adjutant-Generals: had he done so, they would have asked for his opinion on the Corporals; but they called attention to one curious omission, that of the senior General, Kilmaine. We get Bonaparte's estimate of him from the Saint Helena writings. Fifty years old (a patriarch amongst most of the Generals of 'Italie'), Irish by origin, or by misfortune, as he had put it, he was self-composed, had insight, and was very fit to command detached corps and to do all work requiring discernment, sense, and a good head. He had great knowledge of the Austrian troops, and, familiar with their tactics, he did not let himself be led astray by the false information they were accustomed to spread in the rear of an army, nor by the way in which they threw out heads of columns in every direction on the enemy's lines of communication to make it seem that there were large forces where there were not. 'He rendered important services to the army, of which he would have been one of the principal Generals had it not been for the weakness of his health. . . . His political opinions were very moderate.' This reads as if Kilmaine were of the wood from which Marshals were made, and under a sane régime in the North he might have done much there before he came

1791, and Casabianca had taken Bonaparte's place with 'Italie' when he was suspended in August 1794.



South.<sup>1</sup> After holding some detached commands Kilmaine died on the 15th December 1799. This praise is creditable to Napoleon, as he might perhaps have made Kilmaine partly responsible for an important error in the next campaign.

<sup>1</sup> Phipps, i. 208-10.

## IV

### THE PURSUIT OF WURMSER

(September 1796)

Failure of plan for combination with Moreau. Roveredo. Bassano.  
Lannes. Effects of Bonaparte's system of rewards.

#### CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

- 1796 3rd September. 'Sambre-et-Meuse' defeated at Würzburg.  
19th September. 'Rhin-et-Moselle' begins its retreat from the Danube.  
20th September. 'Sambre-et-Meuse' retires over Rhine.

THE campaign of Roveredo, the gorges of the Brenta, and Bassano, fought in September 1796, was one of extraordinary violence, in which the Austrians, often holding what seemed impregnable positions in narrow valleys, were outflanked and driven back by the French, who time after time took their adversaries by surprise by their long forced marches: the rate at which they moved, the determining point of the campaign, being the more remarkable from the apparent unfitness of some of the troops to move at all. The division of Masséna, which had again taken its post in the mountains on the east of Lago di Garda, had 'suffered the hardest privations', and Masséna, who had so much experience in starvation, wrote on the 1st September 1796, when he had heard of Bonaparte's intention to advance, pointing out the impossibility of his men moving: 'The soldiers suffer cruelly; at least two-thirds of my division want coats, vests, breeches, shirts, &c., and are absolutely barefoot.' If the movement Bonaparte ordered took place, his men could not start: it was physically impossible, unless half were left on the way. If his division did not receive the same consideration as others, Masséna would renounce war by resigning: 'Qu'on ne croie pas que j'y mets de l'humeur, c'est en homme libre et aimant le bien que je m'explique.' Next day he and his division began a series of combats and of marches which took them north to Trent, then east to Bassano, and which ended before Mantua. Masséna represented truly a state of things which appalled such men as Schérer but from which Bonaparte asked and obtained

victory. However, on this occasion, although Masséna might profess his good faith, some rancour at complaints of his pillaging influenced him.

Bonaparte had determined to make what was the counter-stroke to the blow delivered by the right and centre of Wurmser in August, and to march on Trent by each side of the Lago di Garda. The Directory had always intended that the *Armée d'Italie* should act in concert with that of the '*Rhin-et-Moselle*' under Moreau, and on the 31st August 1796 Bonaparte wrote to that commander that now they could meet and combine their operations.<sup>1</sup> On the 2nd September '*Italie*' would march north on Trent, which it would reach on the 4th or 5th September. Wurmser seemed to wish to cover Triest, and had a division on the Brenta. The Austrian division at Trent possibly would retire on Brixen and thence along the road to Linz, especially if Moreau advanced on Innsbruck in force. It is significant of the ways of Carnot, the '*Organizer of Victory*', that, intending Moreau and Bonaparte to correspond, no arrangement had been made for a cipher for dispatches which must be in danger of capture. Here Berthier was sending to Reynier, Moreau's Chief of the Staff, a cipher to enable them to correspond with greater safety. Later, on the 9th September, we find Moreau telling Bonaparte that he did not dare to write what his real plan was (to potter vaguely, with an eye to nothing but his own security), lest it fall into the hands of the enemy; in a postscript he said '*General Reynier sends you, in two words in cipher, what we intend to do*'. So the cipher had arrived, but if that had fallen into the hands of the Austrians all would have had to be begun again.

The French striking force was three divisions, some 32,000 men. Vaubois, the successor of Sauret, with 11,000, was to march on the west of Lake Garda; Masséna with a division of 13,000, in which Victor and Joubert led brigades and Lieut.-Colonel Suchet had a battalion of the 18th Regiment, was to move up the Adige valley; while Augereau with his division of 9,000, in which Colonel Lannes commanded the 4th Regiment, flanked him in the mountains to the east. Dubois commanded the cavalry of this force as Kilmaine was left in rear. General

<sup>1</sup> For the movements of Moreau and the '*Rhin-et-Moselle*', see Phipps, ii. 301, and Chapters XV and XVI.



Murat had been at Verona, much to his disgust at being away from head-quarters; and he gave so many reasons for being taken, especially that his A.D.C. (Lasalle perhaps)<sup>1</sup> knew the country well as far as Bassano, that he was attached to the cavalry. Bonaparte's task was made easier by the fact, of which he was unaware, that Wurmser was preparing an advance from the Brenta with his main body of 20,855, to cross the Adige at Borghetto and to relieve Mantua, whilst his right, 25,195 strong, at the northern end of the lake defended the Tyrol. Still, Bonaparte saw that an attempt might be made on his rear on the Adige, and, while Sahuguet with 10,000 blockaded Mantua, Kilmaine, the most competent General for an independent command, was left to hold Verona and the Adige with some 2,500 to 3,000 men. This was a small body, but it could be reinforced by Sahuguet and Bonaparte believed it could hold long enough, if attacked, to enable him to fall on the rear of Wurmser and catch him between the two claws of the pincers.<sup>2</sup> Berthier, Lieut.-Colonel and A.D.C. Marmont, and Captain Bessières accompanied Bonaparte, but I presume Junot was still recovering from his wounds. General Gaultier, Berthier's second, was left with a staff to act for the force in rear, so that Berthier could devote himself to the active body. On the 2nd September the force advanced northwards, Vaubois on the west, Masséna on the east of the lake by the Adige, with Augereau moving amongst the mountains by Lugo on the extreme right. A series of severe but successful engagements took place, in which on the east the greater part of the fighting fell to the brigade of Victor, who later in the campaign passed by Belluno, not dreaming he was to bear that name as duke. The so-called battle of Roveredo was made up of affairs fought by Masséna at Marco and by Vaubois, drawing near the main body, at Mori, on the 4th September. Dubois, commanding the cavalry, was killed that day, when Murat took his place. The same day Captain Bessières of the Guides, seeing two of the enemy's guns being removed, rushed at them with some five or six of his men and captured them both. Then as the head of Masséna's column drew near Trent, Bonaparte sent his A.D.C. Marmont forward

<sup>1</sup> Phipps, iii. 240 and note 1, for Lasalle.

<sup>2</sup> *Corr. Nap.* xxix. 2140. For instructions to Kilmaine and Sahuguet, see *Corr. Nap.* i, Nos. 954-6, 962; Marmont, i. 216-17.

with a small body of cavalry, a thing which must have been most annoying to the regimental officers, who saw the chance of distinction taken from them; and at 8 a.m. on the 5th September Marmont dashed after the enemy into Trent, where Vaubois followed Masséna that day at noon, so ending the most dangerous part of the campaign.

Having thus thrown back the enemy's division into the Tyrol, Bonaparte at once determined to follow Wurmser, not as that commander expected, by retracing his steps down the Adige, but by marching eastwards down the Brenta for Bassano. It is safest to take his plans from what he wrote at the moment, not from his later writings or from the conjectures of historians. He had kept the date of arrival at Trent as told to Moreau, but now he informed the Directory that the plan for a junction had to be abandoned at this late season of the year. Wurmser, he believed, had marched by the Brenta to cover Triest: he would follow, fight a battle there if the enemy stood, and throw them back behind Triest. If Wurmser moved on Verona, then Bonaparte would cut his rear, but I do not think that he much expected this. The letter is rather confused, and one wonders if he were really serious in telling the Directors that with another 10,000 men he would send an army as far as Naples.<sup>1</sup> It sounds more as if he considered this a good bait to draw men from France, or from the Armée des Alpes of Kellermann. Bonaparte of course was bound to deal at once with Wurmser, but he lost nothing by giving up the idea of a junction with that selfish commander Moreau, who on the 3rd September, that is when Bonaparte was fully committed in the defiles of the Adige, had, it is true, seized a bridge over the Isar at Freisingen, but who really was more intent on gaining the bridge over the Danube at Ingolstadt. He knew that his opponent, the Archduke Charles, was now following Jourdan, but he was hanging in the wind, undecided whether to pass to the left bank of the Danube or not. On the 9th September 1796 he wrote from Geisenfeld to Bonaparte, saying that he had forced the Lech and the Isar and had been ready to attack the gorges of the Tyrol, but the retreat of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' had made him change direction. It would have been a good thing if it had really made him do so with effect.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Corr. Nap.* i, No. 968.

<sup>2</sup> Phipps, ii, Chapter XV.

Bonaparte, finding Wurmser had left Trent and was moving eastward down the Brenta, determined to follow; but first he had to drive off the Austrian division under Davidowich which was to the north, holding a strong position on the Adige at Lavis. Taking Masséna with his advanced-guard, the Light Infantry of the division, and ordering Vaubois to follow with his division, Bonaparte set off and by 6 p.m. on the 5th September came on the enemy posted on the opposite bank, with a bridge protected by guns. According to history, the advanced-guard of Masséna was beaten off, but Murat forded the river with a cavalry detachment, each trooper carrying an infantryman behind him, whilst Dallemagne with an infantry regiment of Vaubois's division stormed the bridge. According to Marmont, the bridge, a wooden covered one, had not been cut by the enemy, but they had removed all the planks. Young and active, Marmont collected some 300 of the infantry and ran over on the beams, with but small loss. He says that while this was being done the cavalry forded the river, but that Murat, not wishing to run any risks, remained hidden behind a wall as a mere spectator. Probably both accounts are true, for though Marmont may have got across the bridge first, Bonaparte had his own system of allotting praise, and Murat may have watched the first dash over the bridge before attempting to ford the stream; Bonaparte would not have mentioned Murat as leading the cavalry across without reason. No doubt Marmont is right in saying the enemy were not in force.<sup>1</sup> Davidowich drew off to the north, Vaubois's division was left at Lavis to guard the pass, and Bonaparte and Masséna returned to Trent.

If Bonaparte, perhaps intentionally, gave the Directory but vague information of his intentions, there was no hesitation about his action, and he sent the army like a torrent down the valley of the Brenta. There was, indeed, no time to be lost, for the troops presumably lived largely on stores taken from the enemy, and had the Austrians been able to check the advance, even for a time, the position of the French would have been bad enough. Further, if Wurmser were heading for Mantua it was all important to strike him before he could break through the mere screen of troops left on the Adige. We get glimpses of

<sup>1</sup> What Koch means by mentioning Caliano (just north of Roveredo) in connexion with this affair, I cannot imagine. Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 179.



the force from the memoirs of the officers with the 18th and the 32nd Regiments, of Victor's brigade, Pelleport telling us that, being on duty at the head-quarters of the first stage, Levico, on the 6th September, he saw Masséna and Augereau come to take orders from Bonaparte for the next day, and he remarked their respectful attitude towards their chief, which was in contrast to the spirit of 'cette époque de camaraderie'. At Primolano, where the first fight in the Brenta valley occurred and where the little fort of Cavolo barred the way, the division of Augereau captured the position, Lannes's regiment, the 4th, taking the part hitherto played by Victor's brigade in storming the position in close column whilst the Light Infantry turned the hills; and, the cavalry getting ahead of the beaten body, all the Austrians engaged, 2,800 men with five guns and some colours, were captured. Worn out with their labour, that night the army halted at Cismone; Bonaparte himself, half dead from fatigue and hunger, was only too happy to share a ration of bread with a private, who was to be rewarded at Boulogne.

Wurmser had already started from Trent to join the head of his column marching on Mantua when he heard of Bonaparte's advance, but, confident that his troops at the head of Lake Garda would beat off the French, he did not alter his plans: indeed on the 7th, the day on which Primolano was taken by the French, the leading Austrian division under Meszaros had attacked Verona, but had been beaten off by Kilmaine. Then that same day, realizing how his rear was pressed, Wurmser recalled Meszaros and prepared to defend Bassano. Time pressed, and on the 8th September Bonaparte threw both divisions on the last gorges of the Brenta, Augereau on the left and Masséna on the right bank; Lannes's regiment this day joined Masséna and led his column. The enemy were broken and were pursued into and through Bassano; the regiment of Lannes 'passed the bridge in close column, as at Lodi'. The cavalry under Murat broke into the flying enemy and the French took thirty-five guns with their teams, two pontoon-trains, one of which would have been invaluable to Meszaros, five colours, and 3,000 prisoners. Most of the large captures were due to the active pursuit by Murat's cavalry. Lieut.-Colonel Marmont, who had been with the division of Augereau, says that in a wild charge he himself reached Citadella, the seventeenth man,

striking the head of the Austrian trains. This battle was something like that of Vittoria, the enemy not having intended to engage to the end but to retreat, and the parks getting jammed and being unable to escape. Roguet implies that the march of Augereau on Primolano was not well executed, that Wurmser might have been cut off, and that Bonaparte at the first interview received Augereau coldly, Augereau excusing himself by his want of maps and guides. Roguet was with the 32nd Regiment in the division of Masséna, had no special means of information, and, as far as I know, is not corroborated by any one; but if his account is right, it is probable that the fault of Augereau was committed not at Primolano, where he could not have cut off Wurmser nor have wanted maps in the valley, but before, when passing from the Adige to the Brenta. When Masséna on the 5th September, after passing through Trent, had been throwing back the Austrians northwards, Augereau, who had been in the mountains on his right, had found it impracticable to make farther progress there and, inclining to his left, had come down into the Adige valley. He was then sent by Bonaparte into the Brenta valley, on Borga in the Val di Sugana, marching eastwards by the Sorda valley at Matarello, more than half-way on the road from Roveredo to Trent; that is, he was to march by the shortest route south of Lake Caldonazzo, whilst Masséna came from Trent along the north of that lake, to Levico. Bonaparte might therefore have expected Augereau to cut off part of the enemy's column; and the road being a mountain one would explain that General's complaint about want of maps and of guides. This, however, is a mere surmise of my own. Wurmser apparently had left Trent on the 4th September,<sup>1</sup> so he himself could not have been cut off, which disposes of Roguet's other complaint.

Colonel Lannes, who was slightly wounded at Bassano, was the hero of the day. Augereau, to whose division he belonged, reminded Bonaparte of how brilliant the conduct of the 4th Regiment had always been, and said that its intrepidity was in part due to the example of the brave officers who commanded it. He asked, therefore, for the promotion to General of Brigade of 'Colonel Lannes, who in this army, as in that of the "Pyrénées

<sup>1</sup> Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 180-1. Jomini puts him at Bassano on the 6th, and probably on the 5th, September; Jomini, *Rev.* ix. 111.

Orientales", has not ceased to give the most striking examples of bravery, and who in the last affair has taken two colours from the enemy'. The same day, the 9th September 1796, Bonaparte wrote to the Directory begging them to make Lannes General of Brigade: 'He was amongst the first of those who routed the enemy at Dego, was first to pass the Po at the bridge of Lodi, and now to enter Bassano.' This promotion, however, was not made till the 17th March 1797. By a curious mistake, perhaps that of a copyist, Augereau asked for the promotion of the Lieut.-Colonel 'frère de cet officier', i.e. of Lannes; but in reality he meant Lieut.-Colonel Frère, who was also recommended by Bonaparte and who got in time the Colonelcy of the regiment, and became General on the 12th September 1802.<sup>1</sup> Oddly enough there was another Lannes who distinguished himself at Bassano, but he was then only a Lieutenant and was not a brother of the Marshal.<sup>2</sup> Bessières, commanding the Guides, was promoted Lieut.-Colonel on the 4th September 1796 (the date of the battle of Roveredo), or had that date given him later on.

Although the highest praise must be given to Bonaparte for this astonishing campaign, which displayed his characteristic power of dealing with unexpected changes in the position of the enemy, still, much of the success must be ascribed to the army itself. The vehemence, swiftness, and continuity of the advance northwards up the Adige and of the pursuit eastwards down the Brenta, which had so surprised the Austrians, could not have been achieved by ordinary troops under ordinary leaders. The enemy had considered the positions they held so strong, if not impregnable, that their defeats had caught them unawares, and unprepared for retreat. Strong as a position in a gorge might seem, the French Light Infantry swarmed up the hills alongside, and then the strong, heavy, close columns, at first formed of Victor's hungry wolves, then of the men of Lannes, and lastly of both divisions, swung into sight and crushed all resistance; whereupon the cavalry would dash into the broken mass and enormous captures were made of guns, colours, and men. One can imagine the scene of confusion when Lannes was able to take two colours himself. No doubt we read only of the heads

<sup>1</sup> Général Comte Georges (alias Bernard-Georges-François) Frère (1764-1826); *Fastes*, iii. 229-30.

<sup>2</sup> Lieut.-Colonel Jean Lannes (1766-1812); *Fastes*, v. 549.



of the columns. In the palmiest days of the Empire the men, well paid, each with a pair of boots on his feet and another in his pack, straggled enormously, and a pack of marauders hung on the flanks and rear of the *Grande Armée*. What must the straggling have been with troops many of whom had started barefoot, and with such a wail from their commander as I have given from Masséna! Still, as the long snake wound its way along the valley, its head struck, and struck again and again.

Some detail of the next operations is necessary in order to get all the persons in whom we are interested properly placed. The question now was which of two things Wurmser would do: make for Mantua, or try back by Padua, where so many fugitives had taken refuge that it was thought a whole division had retreated to it. It was important to prevent him joining the garrison of Mantua with whatever force he still had, which Bonaparte thought was 8,000 men; in reality he had 16,000, of whom 6,000 were cavalry, not yet beaten and in good fighting order.<sup>1</sup> The French marched on the 9th September for Citadella, and, finding that Wurmser had crossed the Brenta at Fontaniva, Bonaparte sent Masséna south-west on Vicenza with orders to be careful that Wurmser did not slip past his right back for Bassano. Bonaparte with his staff and the cavalry of Murat accompanied this division, and Augereau was sent on south for Padua. But that night, believing that Wurmser, unable to pass by Verona or to get back by Padua, would make for Legnago, Bonaparte ordered Augereau to march next day for that point, unless he became sure that Wurmser was not moving there, when he was to make northwards for Verona. He was to take care that Wurmser did not slip past his left for Venice. The troops of Masséna had been hurried on with remorseless haste. Once, after leaving Vicenza, the 18th Regiment, who had just halted to make their soup, were ordered on, when the men, justly angry, upset their kettles in the worst of tempers; but Bonaparte, riding up, said, 'Courage, and the enemy, who have escaped from Bassano, will soon lay down their arms before you', and the regiment marched all night to catch Wurmser. In the evening of the 10th September Masséna, with very scanty

<sup>1</sup> *Corr. Nap.* xxix. 145. Jomini, *Rev.* vii, &c., 116, makes 10,000 infantry and 4,000 horse; Clausewitz (1796), 173, makes 12,000 infantry and 4,000 horses. See account of Berthier in *Campagne du Général Buonaparte*, 150-1, note 1.

equipment, began passing his men over the Adige at Ronco, a place the division was soon to know well in the Arcola campaign. Once over, the advanced-guard wheeled south for Sanguinetto on the Sandue river, where they might have forestalled the head of Wurmser's column, which only left Legnago on the morning of the 11th September; but by mistake the guide led them by a longer road, which brought them to Cerea, on the Menago river, like Sanguinetto west of Legnago, but nearer that place. Even then Murat with a small body of cavalry, leading the column, struck the head of the Austrians at Cerea, but he was driven back. Pijon came up with the 18th Light Infantry and took the bridge blocking the road, but he was overwhelmed. Then Bonaparte himself arrived and hurried the 18th of the Line (Suchet's regiment) into action, but, exhausted by the rapidity of their march, they were broken and thrown back on the division, whilst Bonaparte had to gallop off. Wurmser, told of this by an old woman, urged the pursuit of the commander, specially directing his men to bring him in alive, but the search failed. Lieut.-Colonel Suchet was wounded in this affair, in which Victor's coolness saved the situation. Pelleport, who was there, says that Bonaparte complained bitterly that his orders had not been understood, referring, I presume, to his directions to Masséna not to attack unless the enemy had marched on Mantua,<sup>1</sup> but he may only have meant that the attack had been made prematurely.

Wurmser went on for Mantua, which he reached after some successful affairs with small bodies of the French, and on the 12th September Masséna followed, first sending Victor's brigade to blockade Legnago on the right bank of the Adige, whilst the division of Augereau did the same on the left bank.<sup>2</sup> Wurmser had left some 1,600 men in Porto-Legnago with orders to hold out for three days, hoping that he might be able to get back in that time with his troops reinforced from Mantua. Augereau, as we shall see, was ill and seems not to have pressed the garrison, which, however, surrendered on the 13th September. That day Bonaparte called up Victor to rejoin Masséna at Castellaro, ordering Augereau to follow with his division. Masséna, receiving Victor's brigade, took post before Mantua at Due Castelli,

<sup>1</sup> *Corr. Nap.* i, No. 987, which, I think, should be dated the 11th September.

<sup>2</sup> Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 193, reverses this, obviously by error.

having Sahuguet with the troops of the blockade on his right at La Favorita; while Bon, with the division of Augereau, moved to Governolo on the Mincio and then up the left bank of that river on Saint-Georges. Augereau himself was ill, and on the 13th September he had written to Bonaparte, saying that for four years of active and uninterrupted campaigns he had struggled with damaged health. Now numerous ills disabled him: piles prevented him riding, rheumatism (which disabled him after Eylau) put the whole of his body in pain, and his chest was affected. With regret he had to go to Brescia or Milan, leaving his division to Bon, a General who did well but whom Augereau does not seem to have wished to remain in command.<sup>1</sup> M. Tro-lard believes this to have been a mere feint on the part of Augereau, occasioned, as was that of Masséna at the beginning of this campaign, by a wish to avoid an inquiry into some plundering of which he was accused.<sup>2</sup> But the circumstances were not the same, Masséna having threatened to resign before operations began, while this letter of Augereau's came when all were in full strain after Wurmser, and was really acted on, at least for some weeks, as it is certain that Bon brought the division to Mantua and was still in command of it on the 30th September. Napoleon says: 'General Bon, who commanded the division of Augereau, took Legnago on the 13th September'; and on the 15th September: 'General Bon, commanding temporarily the division of General Augereau, who is ill, arrived from Governolo' before Mantua. Up to the 13th September Bonaparte was sending orders to Augereau: on the 14th September it is Bon whom he orders up from Governolo. Augereau was certainly absent at a very important crisis, and, whatever his failings, he would never have bolted from mere temper.

What soldier could fail to admire the gallant old Wurmser, never depressed by defeat, who, having been hunted from the Brenta to Mantua, now stood in front of the garrison, determined to cut his way back, his troops taking his own tone and striking with a spirit which might have prevented the last disasters. When Masséna reached Due Castelli on the morning of the 14th September he surprised the Austrians, but they soon took

<sup>1</sup> Général Louis-André Bon (1758-99). Had served in the old army 8 years, joined the volunteers, and was in the Armée des Pyrénées Orientales. He was killed at Acre. *Biog. des Cont.* i. 446-7.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 89.



heart, and, falling on the worn and scattered French, drove them back and took the guns of the advanced-guard. The 32nd, of Victor's brigade, came up, to be thrown back in their turn, and, according to Marmont, the pursuit was only stopped by a battalion of grenadiers which he brought up. This and the other affairs which had taken place since Wurmser crossed the Adige were unlike the French and Austrians, and it seemed as if they had changed parts, the former, tired and straggling, giving way before the men whom they had chased so far and so long. 'The army was extremely fatigued'; says Napoleon, 'it served negligently.' Wurmser was fully justified in writing to Quasdanowich that his men had fought like lions, but he misunderstood the situation when he urged his lieutenant to march to relieve him: 'I am sure you have few enemies before you'; and he was calling on Davidowich and Schubirz to do the same. His relief was to be a more difficult matter than he now thought. His success in reaching Mantua had been due to two happy accidents, by which he had got across first the Adige and then the Mollinella, on the right of Sahuguet's force at Castellaro, without meeting the resistance which would have brought his pursuers on him and so probably have forced him to capitulate in open field. It is worth giving the reason why he was able to seize Legnago, as an example of the necessity for officers to keep a cool head in emergencies. Kilmaine had had a force holding Legnago, but when he was threatened in Verona he called this body up there, to be replaced by one which Sahuguet was to send from the blockading force. The Lieut.-Colonel commanding this body got up in time, but having had some of his men sabred by a body of Austrian cavalry he assumed that their army had got across the Adige and had cut him off; and, also hearing that the army under Bonaparte had perished in the Tyrol, he withdrew on Mantua. In reality a small party, two squadrons of the enemy's cavalry, full of enterprise, had crossed the Adige by the ferry at Albaredo and was scouring the country for news.

There was much compensation for these checks on the 15th September 1796 at the battle of Saint-Georges, where the Austrians attacked the besiegers. Sahuguet was held before the Favorita, and Wurmser threw himself on Bon's division, which was coming up from Governolo on the French left,

believing he was also dealing with the division of Masséna, which was hidden by the ground. Then Bonaparte threw Masséna forward on the line covering Saint-Georges, which Victor attacked with some Light Infantry, a battalion of grenadiers, and the 18th Regiment. Part of the division turned to the left for La Favorita, with the 29th and 32nd in reserve. To this last regiment Bonaparte spoke, 'Your rival, the 4th Regiment of Augereau's division' (the regiment of Lannes), 'is on the right; it must not enter Saint-Georges before you.' 'Let us pass,' said the men, 'and it will soon be finished.' The enemy began to give way and the 18th advanced, the first battalion in close column on the road, the two others deployed on its flanks, firing by word of command, for special care was taken of the manœuvres this day. A regiment of Austrian cuirassiers fell on them, but this time the men did not yield an inch, and beat them off. Masséna gave Marmont a battalion of the 18th and one of grenadiers, and placing these in column he entered Saint-Georges and took the head of the inner bridge. The Austrians were driven into Mantua with heavy loss, but the French too had suffered severely, especially Masséna's division.

After the struggle came the rewards. Masséna mentioned Victor as having been wounded twice, once at least severely, but, after having himself bandaged, he had led his men into Saint-Georges. Masséna said that he owed the greatest praise to the bravery with which Victor and Rampon had led their brigades; he also mentioned Adjutant-General Leclerc and 'your A.D.C. Marmont', for having checked the cavalry that was charging part of the 18th: 'the 18th and 32nd have not on this occasion belied their high reputation.' He asked for the promotion of Adjutant-General Chabran, who had led the column into Saint-Georges. Bonaparte, in his report to the Directors, repeated much of this, with some additions and omissions, and began by saying that it was owing to the courage of the 8th battalion of grenadiers and the coolness of Victor that they had got so well out of the combat at Cerea on the 12th September.<sup>1</sup> Victor was also named amongst the wounded, with Murat, 'wounded slightly', and Colonel Lannes, whose regiment, fighting on the left in Bon's division, had drawn the principal attention of the enemy. Monnier, who commanded the 18th, was

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, p. 97.

said to have distinguished himself specially; 'Suchet, Lieut.-Colonel of the 18th, was wounded on the day of the 11th' (really 12th) 'September, whilst fighting courageously at the head of his battalion.' 'The 8th battalion of grenadiers, led by Adjutant-General Leclerc<sup>1</sup> and my A.D.C. Marmont, performed prodigies of valour.' Amongst his few recommendations for promotion was Colonel Leclerc, to be General of Brigade.<sup>1</sup> As Joubert is never mentioned in this campaign, not even in the detail of the divisions, I presume he was ill in rear.<sup>2</sup>

The race for promotion and the love of distinction had begun in the Armée d'Italie earlier than in any other force, fostered as they were by the policy of Bonaparte, a point noted by Desaix when he visited Italy later. Bonaparte 'has never seen a regiment but he has persuaded it that he considered it the first in the army', and different corps carried his words emblazoned on their colours. The 18th had: 'Brave 18th, I know you, the enemy will not stand before you'. The 32nd had: 'J'étais tranquille: la brave 32me était là'. The 57th had: 'La terrible 57me demi-brigade, que rien n'arrête'. Much of this was in the future, but already, as we have seen, the regiments had their rivals, and officers disliked hearing others given praise which they considered due to themselves. The report of Bonaparte pained Masséna, who protested. He wrote that he complained of the former reports of Lonato and Roveredo, which had not done him justice. The gain of the battle of Saint-Georges was due to his arrangements, his activity, and the calmness with which he foresaw everything; still not a word was said of him or of Rampon, who had played the principal parts that day. Now he must have seen his mistake in putting an A.D.C. at the head of any of his men: Marmont was mentioned—and he acknowledged that that officer had done well—but nothing was said of Chabran, who all the time had led the grenadiers on Saint-Georges, whilst Marmont and Leclerc had only come up in the heat of the action.

<sup>1</sup> *Corr. Nap.* i, No. 1,000. The Adjutant-General Leclerc named by Bonaparte was Charles-Emmanuel Leclerc (1772–1802), who became General of Brigade the 21st March 1797, married Pauline Bonaparte, and died at San Domingo. The Leclerc he recommended for promotion was Colonel Pierre-Jean Baptiste Leclerc d'Osteins (1754–1800), Colonel of the 10th Chasseurs, who got the promotion, and died in Egypt. He was a friend of Desaix. *Susane, Cav. française*, iii. 115; Desaix, *Journal*, note 2, p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 218, includes him in October 1796 amongst the disabled officers.



Chabran, a brave and skilful officer, had for long been vainly recommended by Masséna for promotion to General of Brigade. The forgetfulness of himself, Masséna said, tore his heart and threw discouragement into his soul: 'This letter is dictated by my usual loyalty and frankness; and in opening my heart to you, I flatter myself that you will render justice to me, as to several officers of my staff.' Masséna got no satisfaction; and his letter, whilst a proof of the ascendancy which Bonaparte had obtained over his Generals, also shows the bad side of the system. To do himself justice, Masséna considered that he had to attack Sahu-guet, who had let the enemy come down on his flank; and the somewhat random style in which Bonaparte, at all times of his command, chose names for praise, did much to sow envy and malice amongst his officers. Masséna's letter is not a pleasing one: it would be good to have got the opinion of Saint-Cyr on it; but the other armies had not the same mania, and thought less of what was said of them. I except Hoche, who had much of Bonaparte's style in such matters. It is curious to compare letters of English officers of that generation, where the tendency is to say: '*We* did it, but mind you do not mention it'; as if a fine action were a thing to be enjoyed in private.

Marmont now had his triumph. The day after the battle of Saint-Georges Bonaparte suddenly said to him: 'Marmont, I send you to Paris; start at once; go to carry there our trophies and present to the Government the twenty-two colours taken from the enemy: go and recount all that we have done, and announce that I again send 15,000 prisoners into France. You have not wasted your time by waiting; you have had the good fortune to take part in our last operations, and you will have new deeds to relate. Remember your wrong behaviour at Brescia, in order not to do the same again, and another time do not doubt either my justice or my affection.' Well might Marmont after his treachery in 1814 still believe the Emperor would have forgiven him. Having, as I said before, praised him as performing prodigies of valour at Saint-Georges, Bonaparte told the Directory that, 'I send you my A.D.C. Marmont, the bearer of twenty-two standards taken from the Austrians'. Leaving Verona on the 23rd September Marmont went off for Paris, calling at his family's house near Châtillon on his way; there his father was so struck by the glory won by the Army of

Italy that he had a trophy painted on the front of the house, of the twenty-two colours with the date of his son's passage. At the Capital his reception was magnificent. On the 1st October the Minister for War, Petiet, took him in his carriage in a procession, whilst around rode twenty-two officers of the garrison, carrying the twenty-two colours. Then before the Directory in their red coats, or cloaks, Marmont gave a sketch of the deeds of the army. In presenting also two flags taken from the soldiers of the Pope, Marmont characteristically declared that the army did not value them as they were won with so little trouble, but they showed how active the army was and how much territory it had covered. To this the President, Larevellière-Lépeaux, replied with a curious warning that it was as glorious to serve against the enemies in the Interior as against those of the exterior. The Directory had already written to Bonaparte that they were ready to grant to the brave men who had distinguished themselves the rewards for which the commander had asked, and Marmont, besides being given a pair of pistols, was made Colonel and given the command of the 2nd Regiment of Horse Artillery.<sup>1</sup> It is amusing to think that according to the official tables the ranks ran: Lieut.-Colonel Bonaparte of the artillery, detached as General-in-Chief of the Armée d'Italie; Colonel Marmont of the 2nd Regiment of Horse Artillery, detached as A.D.C. to General Bonaparte. After a brief enjoyment of the life of Paris Marmont set off again for Italy. At Milan Joséphine warned him that the campaign was begun, and he rejoined Bonaparte as his commander was about to cross the Adige for Arcola.

<sup>1</sup> Susane, *Hist. de l'Artillerie française*, 2<sup>me</sup> édition, Paris, Hetzel, 1874.

## V

### ARCOLA

(October to November 1796)

French weakness and retreat. Arcola. Masséna, Augereau, Lannes.  
Inactivity of the garrison of Mantua. Promotion of Joubert.

#### CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

- 1796 2nd October. 'Rhin-et-Moselle' wins the battle of Biberach.  
20th–26th October. 'Rhin-et-Moselle' retires over Rhine.  
17th November. Death of Empress Catherine of Russia.  
October to December. Sieges of Kehl and Huningue.

AFTER the battle of Saint-Georges on the 15th September the army had settled down once more to cover the blockade of Mantua, while to the north Vaubois held Trent. Masséna's division was at first at Roverbella, the 18th Regiment being left temporarily at Saint-Georges under Victor. At the instance of Masséna the division was moved to better quarters at Verona on the 25th September, but it was ordered to leave a battalion of grenadiers and the 18th at Roverbella under Victor, although the 18th seems to have been recalled to Saint-Georges by Kilmaine. Victor chose to go to Milan without leave, to have his two wounds looked to; as only one General of Brigade, Pijon, remained, this caused a long misunderstanding between Masséna and Victor, 'to whose bravery and skill, nevertheless, he did not cease to do justice'. It would seem that Victor did not rejoin till after Arcola, at least he is not mentioned in that campaign. Although Lannes was not officially made General of Brigade until the 17th March 1797, yet I think Bonaparte now treated him as having that rank. He would seem to have remained at Milan recovering from his wounds, only appearing at Arcola on the 15th November. Joubert, once more in the ranks, was at first placed at Legnago to guard the Adige below Verona to Ronco. General of Brigade Murat had, as we have seen, succeeded to the command of some regiments of the cavalry with the force under Bonaparte during the Roveredo campaign, after Dubois was killed on the 4th September. Now he was placed properly with the cavalry. Kilmaine, although charged with the blockade



of Mantua, remained nominally in command of that arm, and Murat was given command of one of the three brigades into which it was divided, at Roverbella, Beaumont and Leclerc d'Osteins having the others. We find him writing to Bonaparte from Roverbella on the 25th September, more in the style of an A.D.C. or of an officer holding a separate command than of one in his position. As for Bonaparte's staff, Berthier had not time to be sick or sorry, Lieut.-Colonel Marmont was in France, and Junot rejoined, his wounds cured at least partially, before the Arcola campaign. Then on the 26th October Bonaparte wrote to Berthier, 'I notify you that I have made choice of the citizens Muiron, Lieut.-Colonel of artillery, Sulkowski, assistant on the staff, and Duroc, Captain of artillery, as my A.D.C.s.' Muiron was an old friend, who had been in command of the artillery at Verona and had been praised by Kilmaine. He was to die at Arcola. Sulkowski was a young Pole, who was killed in Egypt. Duroc had been mentioned by Bonaparte as having had his horse shot under him in the first operations on the Brenta valley, a thing always considered praiseworthy to the rider; he had been recommended by Marmont.<sup>1</sup> Here began an honourable friendship between Duroc and Bonaparte which was only to end in 1813.

The campaign of Arcola is one which the student might well work out, not beginning by learning the strength of each army and the plans of the Austrian commander but by placing himself in the position of Bonaparte, and judging his actions only by what he actually knew. It was certain that the Austrians would make another attempt to relieve Mantua, and Bonaparte demanded reinforcements; but the Directory preferred to keep 13,000 men in the West for Hoche's foolish expedition to Bantry Bay,<sup>2</sup> rather than to send them where they would have finished the war in Italy. Some few battalions did arrive from La Vendée and were amalgamated with the old regiments, but these were not enough. The army had suffered much in the last campaigns, and not only in numbers, for, in the frequent desperate engagements, naturally it had been the bravest and most enterprising who had fallen, either amongst the dead or the wounded. A

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Sulkowski (1774-98). Général Géraud-Christophe-Michel du Roc, 1772-1813; Grand Maréchal du Palais under the Empire. Marmont, i. 245, dates his recommendation wrongly.

<sup>2</sup> Phipps, iii. 55-60.

number of the leaders were incapacitated for a time, and not all the regiments could be depended upon. Never probably was the Armée d'Italie in worse trim for fighting than when Alvintzi came down on it for the Arcola campaign. Referring to Generals, Bonaparte told the Directors: 'All who come to us from La Vendée are not used to regular warfare: we make the same reproach to the troops, but they become accustomed to war sooner.' Also the reinforcements melted on the march: the 29th Regiment, leaving Paris 4,000 strong, arrived with 1,100.

An attempt had been made by the French Government to get Mantua by negotiation. The Directory, of which Carnot was a member, with the innate folly of a Board had sent Bonaparte on the 1st October 1796 a decree treating Marshal Wurmser as an *émigré*, because the old soldier had been born in Alsace and had in his early years been in the French army. This the Directory thought would strike him as an inducement to surrender, and so avoid such a fate; but they had sufficient sense to leave Bonaparte free not to present the order, alleging that it might drive Wurmser to despair and so to protract the siege. Bonaparte took care not to lower himself by such an act, and instead Berthier on the 16th October wrote as politely as possible to the old Marshal, offering to let his troops withdraw if he would give up the place: 'The siege of Mantua is more disastrous for humanity than two campaigns: brave men should face danger, but not the pestilence of a marsh. Your cavalry has no forage, your large garrison is badly fed; thousands of sick require change of air, medicines, and healthy food.' To prevent suspicion of any fear of relief on the part of the besiegers, Wurmser was offered the power of ascertaining the situation of the French army, but he made no answer, except by his guns. He had received orders to get away from the place with those of his men who were fit for active service, even if he could only reach the States of the Pope, or Tuscany,<sup>1</sup> and he knew there still remained good reason for hope of relief.

As it became certain that a new Austrian force under Alvintzi was about to advance, and had been seen on the Piave, the first movements of Bonaparte were to send Masséna on the

<sup>1</sup> *Nap. Corr. Italie*, ii. 53-4, 150-1; *Corr. Nap.* ii. 59, Nos. 1092, 1095; Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 209-10, 217. Compare Marmont, i. 247-8, on the effect of such a stroke by Wurmser.

1st October from Verona to Bassano, while Bon brought Augereau's division to Verona, where its proper commander rejoined it. According to Bonaparte, whose figures, I think, are not to be put aside in the way they often are (considering how impossible it is for any returns to show the fighting strength), Vaubois had 8,000 men, Masséna 5,500, and Augereau 5,400; which is 18,900 for his army of observation, and Kilmaine had 9,000 before Mantua. Besides 4,000 in rear there were 14,000 sick and 4,000 wounded.<sup>1</sup> How weak his divisions were is shown by the fact that when Masséna reached Bassano, on the 7th October, he had no Chief of the Staff, nor Generals of Brigade, nor 'chefs du corps', by which I presume that Koch means no Colonels of Regiments.<sup>2</sup> By care of the sick he got back some 2,000 into his ranks. The 18th Regiment had rejoined from Saint-Georges on the 4th October, but it too came with its ranks much weakened by fever, and having no Colonel nor any of its three Lieut.-Colonels with it, so that Suchet must have been left in rear, no doubt ill. This gave Masséna three regiments: the 32nd, the 18th Light, and the 18th 'de bataille', the two 18ths being often confused but the latter being Suchet's regiment. Murat's cavalry brigade was also ordered at the same time from in front of Mantua to follow Masséna to Bassano, but after this we lose sight of him, and it is Leclerc d'Osteins whom we find later with Masséna, Murat perhaps remaining ill in rear. Masséna's force should have communicated with Vaubois at Trent by the Sugana valley, but the enemy blocked that pass and both Generals were too weak to remedy this. Masséna was in a fighting humour, and was ready to hold Bassano as Bonaparte wished it, but he wanted reinforcements and proposed that Vaubois should send him two regiments, which Bonaparte approved, but which fortunately was not done. Then as the enemy massed on the Piave, Masséna reconnoitred them from the right bank on the 30th October, remarking the bad state of their cavalry and hearing from deserters that many of the infantry were Poles, anxious to change sides on the first opportunity, for encouragement was being given to raise a force of that nationality in the French army.

<sup>1</sup> *Corr. Nap.* ii. 1055. The returns of the 22nd October 1796 given by Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 508, make Vaubois 2,500 stronger and Kilmaine 1,200 weaker.

<sup>2</sup> Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 203-4. Even after Arcola Masséna had no Chief of the Staff till Solignac, from France, was appointed. Thiébault, ii. 23.



Bonaparte had gone South to arrange many matters with the Pope and the Southern States, but after visiting Modena, Bologna, and Ferrara, by the 23rd October he came to Verona, and ordered Masséna to fall back from Bassano on Vicenza if the enemy advanced over the Piave with sufficient force to endanger him. As this soon happened, Masséna left Bassano on the 14th November for Vicenza, but when half-way he learnt that Augereau had come up in his support to Montebello and that Vaubois had gained an advantage over the enemy, so, thinking this would modify Bonaparte's previous instructions, he halted his men. Masséna was right, for next day he received orders to advance, and while on the 6th November he attacked part of the enemy on the right bank of the Brenta, Bonaparte, who had come up to Vicenza on his left, sent Augereau, under his own superintendence, to try to reach Bassano, which he nearly did, but night fell before he could get in. Next day Bonaparte ordered both divisions back on Verona. These alternations of advance and retreat depended on the fortunes of Vaubois, whom Bonaparte was watching anxiously. Vaubois had been attacked and driven back, and this at first did not alarm Bonaparte, for once Davidowich, who led the enemy there, had got past the entrance to the Val di Sugana, there was no danger of his joining Alvintzi, who was on the Piave. But Vaubois had not understood his position, and some of his troops did not behave well; he was driven right down to Rivoli, which meant that the Austrians might soon be near Verona in the rear of Masséna and Augereau. All that could be done to retrieve the situation was tried. Joubert, who had been commanding at Legnago, was sent up to serve under Vaubois; Vignolles too was sent, as was Berthier, who was ordered to tell Vaubois for God's sake not to spare couriers.<sup>1</sup> Junot also was left with him, to report. Going himself to Rivoli, Bonaparte addressed the 39th and 85th Regiments, who had fled when attacked, and told them they were not French soldiers, Berthier being ordered to have inscribed on their flags, 'They no longer belong to the Army of Italy'. The men assured him that they had been libelled and asked to be put in the advanced-guard, but the 85th were to show at Rivoli how untrustworthy they were. Then Masséna was given command of the division of Vaubois as well as his own,

<sup>1</sup> See p. 110, note 2.

and, inspecting the positions, he advised that his own division should be sent to Rivoli. Next, by one of those changes so frequent in this campaign, as his reconnaissances, pushed up the Adige as far north as Ala, found no enemy, he informed Bonaparte that Davidowich had either moved westward for Brescia, to come down on the French rear as Quasdanowich had done in August, or else had joined Alvintzi to the east. In the latter case, of course, Vaubois's force could be reduced. This was an unsatisfactory state of things, for if Davidowich had gone to Brescia the communications might be cut at any moment.

Meanwhile Alvintzi had followed the retreating divisions through Montebello to Villanova, pushing forward troops on Verona. Augereau on the 10th November was placing his headquarters at Ronco, with his division lining the Adige, and this made the Austrians in front believe the French were about to evacuate Verona. That same day Bonaparte, taking this advance seriously, sent the divisions of Masséna and Augereau forward against the enemy, and these threw back the Austrian advanced troops for a certain distance. It was important to keep Alvintzi far from Verona and from a junction with Davidowich: Masséna was recalled to his own division, and on the 12th November Bonaparte, with the division of Augereau on the right and that of Masséna on the left, attacked the enemy in their position at Caldiero, some nine miles to the east of Verona. The manœuvres have no importance for us. At first Masséna made good progress, but the Austrian reserves outflanked him; the wind, which had first brought rain, now sent showers of hail in the faces of the men, and the division fell back with the loss of 900 killed and wounded, 800 prisoners, and two guns. Augereau then had to retire also, and Bonaparte brought the dispirited divisions back to Verona.

It is impossible to say with certainty who, of the group with which we are concerned, were at Caldiero. In the angry wail which Bonaparte made to the Directory he says, referring a good deal to the state of affairs at the beginning of the campaign: 'The wounded are the pick of the army; all our superior officers, all our best Generals, are *hors de combat*; all who come to join me are completely inept, and they do not possess the confidence of the soldiers. The Army of Italy, reduced to a handful of men, is exhausted. The heroes of Lodi, Millesimo, Castiglione,

Bassano, have died for their country or are in hospital. Nothing remains to the different corps but their reputation and their pride. Joubert, Lannes, Lanusse, Victor, Murat, Chabot, Dupuy, Rampon, Pijon, Chabran, Menard, Saint-Hilaire, are wounded. . . . Perhaps the hour of the brave Augereau, of the intrepid Masséna, of Berthier, or my own, is ready to strike. Then, what would become of these brave men?' Undoubtedly he was right. Vaubois was showing how wise he had been in doubting his new Generals until they were tried in the field, and it was the chance that neither he nor the leaders he named fell, which saved the army. However, the list he gives must not be taken too literally: for example, Joubert was serving under Vaubois; but certainly Lannes, Victor, and Murat were at this moment probably ill at Milan. So also may Suchet have been: we get no hint from Pelleport, belonging to the 18th, who simply says that their light company devoted itself to saving the guns. Marmont had not yet rejoined and Junot may have been still with Vaubois; Berthier, Bessières, and Duroc we may take as with Bonaparte.

To Joséphine Bonaparte expressed his despair, and he advised her to leave Milan for Genoa; the enemy's force was three times as strong as his; all was lost: only his courage remained; probably he would lose the Adige, then he would dispute the Mincio, and, that lost, if he still existed he would join her at Genoa. Joséphine, however,—according to herself—believing that her departure from Milan would lead to a rising and to massacres there, determined to remain, putting on the best face possible, going to the theatre and leading her usual life. For three nights she was awakened by Italians on the pretext of wanting news, but really to make sure whether she had fled or not. One cannot believe in this heroism of Joséphine, and it is preferable to assume that, with her habitual carelessness, she continued to trust in the luck of her husband.

Depressed as he might represent himself to the Directory and to his wife, the emergency brought out the daring of Bonaparte. Berthier was sent to instruct Vaubois to hold his position, especially the bridge over the Adige near the Chiusa; on the 14th November he rejoined Bonaparte.<sup>1</sup> Verona was left to be

<sup>1</sup> *Corr. Nap.* ii, No. 1184. Derrecagaix, *Berthier*, i. 175-6, I think this is the second mission of Berthier to Vaubois, but I may be mistaken about the first one, see *ante*, p. 108.



guarded by Kilmaine with some 3,000 men drawn from Vaubois ; and on the night of the 14th Bonaparte, with the divisions of Augereau and Masséna, crossed the Adige at Verona, and marching down the right bank of the river, recrossed early on the 15th at Ronco to the left bank by a bridge of boats which Andréossi had been ordered to dismantle and to place in safety on the 9th November. This bridge was laid just above the mouth of the Alpone stream, which was sluggish there. Augereau had three regiments and Masséna four, their strength, according to Bonaparte, being Augereau, 5,000, Masséna, 6,000. Beaumont with three cavalry regiments had followed the column, but almost all the cavalry at first remained on the right bank. The advantages Bonaparte sought by this step are obvious. Roughly speaking, the Adige, down which he moved, runs south-east from Verona, and Alvintzi's route from Villanova and Caldiero to Verona may be taken as nearly parallel to it. From Villanova the road to Vicenza turns to the north-east, but if Bonaparte could reach Villanova whilst Alvintzi was engaged at Verona, he could fall on the Austrian rear and on their trains: certainly he could hope to bring Alvintzi back, and so prevent the junction of the two Austrian columns. The swamps which lay between the Adige and the Villanova road could only be crossed by certain dikes, so that the smaller French force could not be turned by the enemy. All this is plain, but the danger of the stroke seems hardly ever recognized. Alvintzi was moving on Verona with a force of some 25,000 men, who twice had seen the French attack and then retire ; Ronco is some thirteen miles from the eastern gate of Verona as the crow flies: by road it is much longer. What might not Alvintzi do while Bonaparte was engaged there ?

Alvintzi during the 13th and 14th November was considering the situation at his leisure. As Bonaparte was leaving Verona it meant that his adversary had determined to divide his forces ; he himself with about half his men, duly provided with ladders, would make a direct attack on Verona, whilst the rest would throw a bridge over the Adige at Zevio, about half-way between Verona and Ronco; but the difficulty of getting over the marshes to Ronco postponed this plan till the night of the 15th November. To the north Davidowich was to advance by Rivoli and Bus-solengo, but his troops were stretched in such a long column

that he could not determine when he could move. Alvintzi's force was so large that once over the Adige, and the junction made with Wurmser from Mantua, the French could not have resisted. On the morning of the 15th Alvintzi heard the French guns at Ronco, but at first he only sent his trains to the rear on Montebello; then, as he realized that Bonaparte was over the Adige, he stopped his own advance and began to reinforce the troops opposing the French. What if, blocking the dikes by which the French must advance, he had pressed forward? Bonaparte had calculated from his knowledge of his opponent's character that he would be halted: it was a question of temperament, and Bonaparte was right.<sup>1</sup> Wurmser, or Blücher, one imagines, would have gone straight ahead. The stroke which succeeded in 1796 was to fail in 1814. But I have to keep, as far as possible, to the actions of the future Marshals.

Augereau had begun crossing early on the 15th with three regiments under Generals Bon, Verdier, and Lannes, who had just rejoined. Masséna followed with his division, and leaving one regiment, the 75th, to cover the bridge, and the 18th, Suchet's regiment, as a reserve for Augereau,<sup>2</sup> he turned to the left with the others and marched north-west up the left bank of the Adige on the dike leading to Porcile. Bonaparte would appear to have remained at Ronco, to get the first news if Alvintzi attacked Verona, and with him no doubt were Berthier, Bessières, commanding the Guides, and Junot, besides Marmont, now Colonel, who rejoined this morning from Paris.<sup>3</sup> The fighting on the dikes was of a peculiar character, as the heads of the columns alone were engaged and mere mass of numbers did not tell. On one occasion, for instance, Masséna, having with him at the moment only one battalion and 150 horse, met five Austrian battalions formed in one long column. Concealing his infantry, he first fired on the enemy, and then his cavalry, led by Reille, charged along the dike, scattering the Austrian infantry, who were broken, and many taken prisoner, by this charge of his

<sup>1</sup> Alvintzi, in Gachot, 200; Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 234-7, 242; Jomini, *Rev.* ix. 172-6; Marmont, i. 234. Clausewitz (1796), 204-9, considers that Alvintzi was right in hesitating, and declines to give an opinion on his plan for crossing the Adige.

<sup>2</sup> Pelleport, i. 70-1, does not seem to agree to this.

<sup>3</sup> Marmont, i. 235, with wrong date, 17th November instead of 15th, as he means the first day of the fight.

battalion.<sup>1</sup> After some checks he reached Porcile, so near to Verona as to make it impossible for Alvintzi to ignore him and to attack the town. This part of Bonaparte's plan had succeeded.

It was very different with the division of Augereau, which should have gained Bonifacio, to the north, close to Villanova on the road from Vicenza to Verona, when, if both he and Masséna had reached the road, the trains of the enemy would, Bonaparte hoped, be caught between them. No special difficulty was expected at the little village of Arcola, where it would be necessary to cross to the left bank of the Alpone to continue the march on the dike leading to Bonifacio. A battalion of the enemy which had been posted opposite Ronco had not opposed the establishment of the bridge, nor had they given immediate notice to head-quarters, but had contented themselves with retiring to Arcola and putting that village in a state of defence. No doubt they thought they had to meet a mere raid, against which their position was strong enough, for in its front was a bridge over the Alpone some twenty-seven yards long and about twelve feet broad. The roadway itself was of wood, resting on two stone piers, with approaches also in stone. Now the fields on each side of the Alpone are cultivated, but then a marsh some two and a half miles wide spread on each side of the river, only cut by certain dikes; also, what is now a road along the dike leading from Ronco to Arcola was then a mere path. A square tower, according to Gachot, defended the approach, which on the left bank was narrowed by two brick huts, and beyond that was a stream about ten feet broad. Arcola itself was at a little distance, but a group of houses one story high by the side of the road sheltered the defenders, who could fire from them on to the bridge. Augereau, advancing on the dike along the right bank of the Alpone, got close to Arcola without difficulty, but was checked opposite the village by the fire of the enemy. Sending part of his force across the stream to turn the village, he launched Lannes with two battalions on the bridge, which, as I have said, had to be crossed to gain the dike along which the march northwards was to be continued. Lannes, who had only just rejoined from Milan with his wounds unhealed, led on his men with his accustomed bravery, but the temptation to avoid the fire by taking cover under the dike was too great,

<sup>1</sup> See p. 117 for another reference to this incident, and its probable date.



and the column, lining the dike, would only fire from behind it. Augereau then sent on General Verne with two other battalions, but Verne was mortally wounded and his men acted like those of Lannes. Augereau himself was brave enough, and, seizing a colour belonging to one of the regiments, he and his staff made for the bridge followed by some grenadiers, but once again the men took shelter behind the dike. Bonaparte, hearing of this, sent General Guieu with two regiments down the right of the Adige to cross at Albaredo and then to march up to turn Arcola by the left bank of the Alpone. Meantime he himself went up to Arcola, and, following the example of Augereau and asking the men whether they were still the conquerors of Lodi, he led them on, with a colour in his hand. There was no reason that the triumph of Lodi should not have been repeated: there the bridge was long and wide enough to give full field to the guns which swept it, whilst here the wooden bridge, resting on two masonry piers, was only just wide enough for a gun to pass, so that its parapets would give some cover, and the enemy seem to have had only two guns. In front of Bonaparte were two of his A.D.C.s, Marmont and Muiron; the men seemed to have taken heart, and in a few minutes the bridge would have been passed or Bonaparte would have fallen, when an unnamed officer seized Bonaparte round the body, exclaiming: 'General, you will get yourself killed, and if you fall, we are lost; you shall not go farther; this is not your place.' Marmont, turning round, believed his General was wounded; a group formed, which halted the column; then once more the men took shelter behind the dike. So great was the disorder that Bonaparte fell into a canal on the side of the dike, and the enemy, charging over, got close to him, when Belliard, then Adjutant-General,<sup>1</sup> collected some grenadiers, and, throwing the Austrians back, gained time for Marmont and Louis Bonaparte to drag their General out of his dangerous position. Getting a horse, Bonaparte went back to Ronco, drenched, to change and to dry himself. Then the enemy, reinforced and emboldened, drove back over the Alpone those of the French who had crossed to the left bank, and even tried, ineffectually, an advance over the bridge. Finally Bonaparte, anxious as to what Alvintzi might do on the right of the

<sup>1</sup> The future cavalry General of the Empire and Chief of the Staff to Murat. We have seen him at Jemappes with the *Armée du Nord*; Phipps, i. 143.

Adige, drew both divisions back to that side of the river, Masséna leaving troops to cover the bridge-head on the left bank.<sup>1</sup>

Now occurred what seems an extraordinary thing. Guieu with his two regiments, sent down to Albaredo, had all this time been marching up the left of the Alpone, and at 7 p.m. he attacked Arcola and drove the Austrians from it. The French now held the coveted post, but Guieu evacuated it and retired on Albaredo. Why did he do this? Because, says Koch, he found no traces of the French, nor any orders from Masséna, and he feared that he might be cut off in the midst of troops which had forced the French back. The Duc de Bellune gives the same explanation, as does Gachot; Thiébault, who only joined this army later but who would know what the talk in it was, says that this evacuation of Arcola came from a mistake which had never been pointed out, because, perhaps, it originated in too high a quarter (that is, from Bonaparte himself); or from a misunderstanding which had not been explained; or from a disobedience which it was not desired to punish; or, finally, that the brigade could not be supported. He, by the way, believed that the brigade retired on Ronco. This seems a comprehensive range of possibilities. At the time Bonaparte reported the matter vaguely, telling the Directory, 'On avait jugé à propos, pendant la nuit, d'évacuer le village d'Arcole;' and they were prepared to be attacked on the subject. At Saint Helena he took the whole responsibility: the village was now unimportant; the enemy had changed their position and were facing the army; he was obliged to suppose that Vaubois had been driven back on Castelnovo and Roverbella, so that it might be necessary to march to succour him. Also he said that Arcola was left occupied by large pickets. Marmont, who was with him, says that the evacuation ordered by Bonaparte, if surprising, was well calculated, as it tempted the enemy to return there, so placing the French under the most favourable circumstances. Berthier simply says that Guieu retired.<sup>2</sup> If Bonaparte at the time really ordered this evacuation, it is ill arguing against the master of war; and one is tempted to forget that he did not know, as we do, that Vaubois had not

<sup>1</sup> *Tableaux historiques*, 52 seems quite untrustworthy.

<sup>2</sup> Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 245; Duc de Bellune, 78-9; Gachot, *1<sup>re</sup> Campagne*, 196; Thiébault, ii. 39; *Corr. Nap.*, ii. 117 and xxix. 157-60; Marmont, i. 239-40; *Campagne du Général Buonaparte*, 206.

retired, and so one is apt to assume that it was certain that a fresh attack would be made by the two divisions next day. No doubt the position was entirely changed as far as dealing with Alvintzi was concerned: all hope of striking his rear and his trains had been lost by the failure of Augereau to advance, and now, instead of aiming at his adversary's rear, Bonaparte was face to face with him, though the two forces were separated by marshes only penetrable by the dikes. Still, the position of Arcola was so menacing, and Bonaparte took such pains to gain it on the next two days, that one may be forgiven if one shares something of the surprise of Clausewitz at the evacuation, and indeed at much of this campaign.

Next day, the 16th November 1796, Bonaparte at 4 a.m. received a dispatch from Vaubois showing that that General still held Bussolengo and had not been attacked by Davidowich; so the two divisions of Augereau and Masséna were again sent across the bridge at Ronco and again advanced, on the same dikes as on the day before; but this time they met the enemy in full advance too, for Alvintzi meant to throw the French back across the Adige. On the left Masséna once more marched on Porcile, and, meeting Provera, threw him back, capturing many prisoners, taking five guns and nearly reaching Caldiero. On the right, however, Augereau had once more failed against Arcola, now more strongly held; his division, like a horse balked at its fence, refused to face the fire on the bridge. At about two in the afternoon Augereau informed Bonaparte that, as one would have thought had been shown by the affair of the first day, Arcola could only be taken if a bridge were thrown across the Alpone near its mouth. Then came a series of failures. An attempt to land some of Augereau's men on the left of the Alpone was beaten off by the enemy; Vial with a regiment was next sent to cover the establishment of a bridge over the Alpone, but the fire of the enemy stopped this. Marmont now was sent to place a battery of fifteen guns on the right of the Adige, to enfilade and to take in rear the enemy on the left of the Alpone, but they were partly sheltered by the dike on the left bank of the Adige, so that he had to use ricochet fire with reduced charges. When this had continued for half an hour, Dragoons were used to bring up fascines and throw them in the Alpone to form a causeway: a curious attempt, which failed, for weak as



the current of the Alpone was, still it swept the fascines into the Adige. Vial then waded across the Alpone, the water being breast-high (in fact a few of the French had already on the first day crossed near Arcola by fording), and several officers and some grenadiers followed, but the temper of the men was so bad that they remained on the right bank, and Vial, who returned, was fortunate even to keep them there. At the end of this, the second day of the struggle in the marsh, Bonaparte withdrew both divisions to the right bank of the Adige again, only leaving posts to guard the bridge-head. The Austrians once more held Arcola and Albaredo.

The following day, the 17th November, was the last day of the battle. Napoleon says that these three days had changed the spirit of the army and success was assured; this was written at Saint Helena, but Pelleport says, probably truly enough, that the countenance of the troops was sad, and suggested rather devotion to the honour of their arms than hopeful resolution. Alvintzi, indeed, far from considering himself beaten, meant to force Bonaparte back to the Adige, whilst part of his own army was to be thrown across the river below Verona. Masséna crossed first, and then turning to the left again with the 18th Regiment, he put himself at its head, and, with drums beating, charged a heavy column which was advancing from Porcile.<sup>1</sup> 'The 18th', says Pelleport, 'was admirable at this critical moment; I use the expression of Masséna, who was not prodigal of praise.' On the right the struggle was much more complicated. Part of Masséna's division had been left under Robert to advance up the right of the Alpone, while Augereau had been ordered to send a battalion down the right of the Adige, which was to cross at Legnago and then to ascend the left bank, sweeping before it all the posts of the enemy. As the column from Legnago appeared, Augereau came over from Ronco, and then crossed to the left of the Alpone, near its mouth, by a bridge thrown over that stream in the night, and moving down the left of the Adige on Albaredo, he crushed the enemy there between him and the Legnago column. Both bodies then joined and moved up the left of the Alpone on Arcola, whilst Robert on the right bank did the same. This combined movement failed, for the Austrians threw back both columns, and Augereau's men ran for the Alpone bridge and

<sup>1</sup> This may have been the occasion alluded to on p. 113.

were only rallied by him on the right bank. The moment was critical, and Berthier was sent to recall the division of Masséna, even to the right bank of the Adige according to Roguet. 'The 1st battalion of the 32nd', replied Masséna, 'has done nothing to-day: it is available for the march on Arcola. Before deciding on retreat, this movement must be carried out; with this corps one can run the risk.' 'I'll go and tell the General commanding,' said Berthier, 'whose intentions you divine.' Gardanne led the battalion to Ronco, and meeting Bonaparte, the men cheered for the Republic. '32nd, I like seeing you,' answered he, and placed them in ambush.<sup>1</sup> When the pursuing enemy got so far, Gardanne led his battalion on, and though he fell wounded, the enemy, taken in flank, were routed, and Masséna, coming up with the other battalions of the 32nd and the 18th Light, made for Arcola up the right of the Alpone. Augereau, on the other side of the stream, resumed his advance, spreading part of his force for a time on the marsh to his right, to outflank the enemy, whom he forced back. Finally Bonaparte sent a Lieutenant of his Guides, Damingue, nicknamed 'Hercule',<sup>2</sup> with 25 Guides and 4 trumpeters to sound on the left rear of the enemy, who at last gave way. Masséna's troops crossed the long-fought-for bridge of Arcola, and Augereau pressed on up the left bank till thrown back on the village by Alvintzi in person. Both divisions passed the night right and left of Arcola. On the left the 18th had routed a column opposing it on the dike and had established itself at Porcile, causing Provera, commanding the enemy's right, to abandon Caldiero and fall back on Villanova. The third day's fight was ended, although the tired French were disturbed by a chance night attack which got within 150 yards of Masséna, who was busy giving orders. Seizing a drum, the General beat the alarm on it with the pommel of his sword, and sent Adjutant-General Belliard against the enemy, who soon fled. That night Bonaparte slept at San Gregorio, between Arcola and Albaredo but to the east of the dike.

At 7 a.m. on the 18th November Bonaparte ordered Augereau on the right and Masséna on the left of the Alpone to ad-

<sup>1</sup> I follow Roguet, i. 296-7. Berthier in *Campagne du Général Buonaparte*, 207-8, says nothing of this.

<sup>2</sup> Lieut.-Colonel Joseph Damingue, called Hercule (1761-1820); served later in Egypt. *Fastes*, v. 450-1; *Corr. Nap.* xxix. 162, note 1. Bonaparte promoted him Captain on the 21st November 1796; *Corr. Nap.* ii, No. 1308.

vance northwards on Villanova, and Marmont rode forward to reconnoitre. Instead of coming on any post of the enemy, he only found wounded and stragglers; and Bonaparte, being thus informed that Alvintzi had retired, went forward and re-entered Verona from the east in triumph four days after he had left it by the west in the gloom of defeat. The withdrawal of Alvintzi was a piece of good fortune for him, and is difficult to account for. Davidowich had driven Vaubois from Rivoli, capturing Generals Fiorella and Valette and forcing the French left over the Mincio by Peschiera; he was advancing on the 18th November by Castelnovo, pushing parties on Verona, so that Bonaparte could not have continued in front of Alvintzi with Davidowich coming on his rear or joining Alvintzi's right. No doubt Alvintzi had lost heavily: 535 killed, 1,535 wounded, 4,141 prisoners, and eleven guns, according to the French; but the French themselves had also suffered severely, losing 1,000 dead, 2,300 wounded, and 1,200 prisoners, and many of their leaders being disabled. In the two divisions Guieu, Augereau, and Masséna were the only Generals untouched. Verdier, Bon, Lannes, Verne, Robert, Gardanne, and Belliard had been wounded. What was worse, the conduct of the men had not been good. 'I ought not to conceal from you', wrote Bonaparte, 'that I have not found in the troops my phalanxes of Lodi, Millesimo and Castiglione: fatigue and the absence of brave men have taken from them that impetuosity with which I had the right to hope to capture Alvintzi and the greater part of his army.' 'The men', says Marmont, 'fought badly and seemed to have lost all their energy.' Alvintzi's own troops were not good, as Masséna had remarked on first seeing them, and they had suffered greatly in the fighting in the marsh, for which they were not well suited. Even so, the French had not fairly won their footing on sound land, and had avoided meeting the Austrians on an open field after Caldiero; even if Alvintzi had retired, not wishing to risk his army in a straight fight, it would seem possible for him to have done so without ceasing to exercise pressure on Bonaparte so as to prevent him crushing Davidowich. Instead, Alvintzi drew back and remained passive, intending to join Davidowich by the Brenta valley, thus throwing up the game completely and leaving his lieutenant to have all the French force thrown on him. Bonaparte seized the opportunity given



him at once, and disregarded Alvintzi, only sending the cavalry under Beaurevoir to follow him. Masséna's division was sent on Villanova, then back to Verona, and then to the south-west on Villafranca, to join Vaubois coming from Castelnovo. Taking command of both divisions, Masséna was to attack Davidowich in front whilst Augereau, moving through Verona, struck north-west through the mountains to come down on Dolce, in the Adige valley, in his rear. On the 19th November, however, Davidowich heard of Alvintzi's retreat and drew back northward to Rivoli. There, finding that Alvintzi was on the Adige, he stood for a time, but the flank movement of Augereau made him withdraw northward again on Trent.

Alvintzi had retired through Montebello to Olmo, some four or five miles west of Vicenza, where he held council with his Generals as to whether, with his worn troops, he should try another attack, or, going up the Brenta and the Sugana valley, he should join Davidowich and then march down the Adige with the whole force, an operation which would take twelve days. Altogether he had some 16,000 men, the remains of 28,000. On the 19th November the Generals gave their opinion, already foreshadowed by Alvintzi, that Davidowich would be crushed if they remained inactive, and an advance was prepared for, Davidowich being informed that Alvintzi counted on being on the Adige at latest on the 22nd; he would cross even in the presence of the enemy, whilst Davidowich should repulse the French, and follow them up if they turned on the main army. On the 20th, therefore, Alvintzi advanced once more, and as but few troops had been left by Bonaparte, on the 21st he was at Colognola, near Caldiero, with posts close to Verona and part of his force again holding Arcola and Albarredo. His way was clear for Mantua, and once there he could have reinforced himself from the garrison so as to be able to face Bonaparte and any troops that General could bring, which would not be many as long as Davidowich were not crushed completely. But, believing the French in front much stronger than they were really, that next day, the 22nd, Alvintzi began sending his baggage to the rear, and he detached troops to the north-west against the rear of Augereau. On the 23rd he heard from Davidowich that the Adige corps could not support him, and, masking his movements by throwing back the

French posts on Verona, that day he reached Montebello and on the 24th was at Vicenza. As he started he heard a cannonade from Mantua, showing that Wurmser was in movement. Until this time the garrison of Mantua, for whom Alvintzi was fighting, had, as usual with them, been strangely quiescent. When in July 1796 Wurmser had raised the siege, the garrison seems to have been ignorant that Sérurier had withdrawn until Colonel Graham and an Austrian officer rode in from the relieving force.<sup>1</sup> Now in November Wurmser, himself in the town, knew that Alvintzi was advancing, and a signal had been agreed on: three salvoes of ten or twelve heavy guns, to be fired at intervals of two minutes at midnight when the Adige should have been crossed. Night after night Graham with the future Marshal Radetzki listened fruitlessly for this signal. At last for three days came the sound of a heavy cannonade on the lower Adige, somewhere about Legnago, and sometimes also firing was heard from Monte Baldo, where, as we know, Davidowich was driving down Vaubois. As Graham says, one would have thought that a sally would have been made when the firing on the lower Adige; say some fourteen miles away, was heard, as it was to be assumed that the blockading force had been weakened to resist Alvintzi, but it was only on the 23rd November, having learnt from Davidowich that he had reached Castelnovo with the left wing, that the Marshal sent out some 8,000 men to the north. Kilmaine, the commander of the blockade, had been called to Verona; Chabot, his successor, was ill, and Moulin,<sup>2</sup> who was in charge, had only arrived lately and did not know the ground, so at first the sortie made way; but the French were then reinforced and threw back the Austrians into the town. Wurmser now realized that Alvintzi had failed.

It will be seen, even in my slight sketch, that this curious campaign of November 1796, in which both commanders made mistakes, gave many more chances than those offered in the affairs at Arcola itself, and that whatever the credit given to Bonaparte, and whatever failings his troops may have shown, still it is to the endurance of his men and to their wearing out the Austrians that success was due. The faults of the Austrians

<sup>1</sup> *Ante*, pp. 65-6.

<sup>2</sup> Phipps, iii. 36, note 1; 235, 259. Commanded Armée des Alpes December 1794-October 1795, when he retired on account of ill health.

were many, but in the end, although this attempt to relieve Mantua failed, yet their army remained at Bassano in a more threatening attitude than before. It would be pleasant to imagine the fiery Wurmser in the place of Alvintzi. As for the men with whom we are concerned, much was due to the energy of Masséna and Augereau; but in blaming the conduct of the soldiers the French place both divisions on a level, while to us it seems as if Masséna had always been successful and Augereau had failed: both Bonaparte and Marmont saw more of the latter's troops. It was on Lannes that Bonaparte lavished praise. Not yet cured from the wound received at Governolo, Lannes, Bonaparte told Carnot, had come on to the field and, having been wounded twice on the first day, at three in the afternoon he was stretched on his bed when he heard that Bonaparte was about to lead the column; he at once threw himself on a horse and came up to the front to join his commander. Obligated to remain on horseback, he received a shot which laid him senseless: 'I assure you that all this was necessary for us to conquer.' Bonaparte also thought highly of what Joubert had done against Davidowich; he asked for his promotion to General of Division, as a young man of the greatest merit, and treating him as having that rank, placed him in command of the division of Vaubois, who was sent to replace Sérurier at Leghorn. Joubert objected strongly to his promotion, but Bonaparte was determined: 'I could count on him as on myself', he said, so that it might be repeated. On the 18th December 1796 Bonaparte informed him that the Directory had confirmed his promotion, and Joubert wrote to him with that distrust of himself which was to be justified at Novi in 1799: 'I only accept the rank with anxiety. For other things, under your orders I shall always act confidently. And then, something must always be left to Cæsar and his fortunes.' This was good, until Cæsar was absent.

In the Arcola campaign there is no mention of either Victor or Murat, both Generals of Brigade. Victor cannot have been engaged, otherwise his name must have appeared; he is not mentioned in the account of Arcola by his son, and no doubt he was suffering from his wounds. Murat seems to have been left at Ronco with a detachment of infantry when Bonaparte marched north after Arcola against Davidowich. On the redistribution of the army Marmont says that Murat had lost all his



reputation for bravery since he returned from Paris, and, wishing to escape from this state, he asked for and obtained the command of an infantry brigade in the division of Joubert, when he re-established his former reputation; but Jomini places him in Rey's division, apparently in command of a cavalry regiment and some *gendarmes*, watching the western shore of Lago di Garda. He certainly was discontented, for on the 9th December 1796 he applied to one of the Directors, Barras, to enter the Guard which he heard they were about to form. Oddly enough considering the situation, he asserted that he would not make such a request if there were still fighting in the Armée d'Italie. True to the exaggerated principles which he still professed, he complained to the Director that nothing was spoken of but 'Monsieur de . . . Baron de . . . Comte de . . .', and that in the society of the higher officers: 'Je me donne à tous les diables.' Barras professes to consider this an attempt by Bonaparte to get a friend near the Directory, but Murat was obviously disgusted with the army, and probably with its commander. Still, we find Bonaparte writing to him on the 24th November 1796 to reconnoitre the enemy and then join him at Rombello, where he was going to visit the blockade of Mantua, in a manner not consistent with his being in disgrace.

During the last campaign Sérurier had been in command at Leghorn, whence an expedition under Gentili had been sent to occupy Corsica, and the island of Elba had also been taken. He had always wished to return to his division when his health permitted, and it now did so. On the 21st November, as we have seen, Vaubois, relieved by Joubert in the command of what I may call the Rivoli division, was ordered to succeed Sérurier in the command at Leghorn, and on the 28th November Sérurier received gladly the order to rejoin the active army; but for some reason, apparently because he was directed to make a tour of inspection at Bologna and other towns, it was not till the 21st December that he was ordered up to Roverbella to retake charge of the blockade of Mantua, which he did on the 27th, Kilmaine having fallen ill in his turn. He had some 10,000 men, formed in two divisions under Dumas and Dallemagne. The General of Division Alexandre Dumas,<sup>1</sup> father of the great Alexandre, had left the Armée des Alpes in October 1796, and

<sup>1</sup> For his former career, see Phipps, iii.

joining 'Italie' had remained for some time at Milan, being placed in command of the 1st division of the force blockading Mantua, at Marmirolo, on the 17th December. On the 19th, when Kilmaine fell ill, he was left in command of a force which he described to Bonaparte as without boots, without breeches—naked indeed—and a great part without arms. On the night of the 23rd December, just before Sérurier arrived, a spy was found trying to enter Mantua, and by threats Dumas got the man to acknowledge that he had swallowed a letter in a ball of wax. A purgative placed the letter in the hands of Dumas, and it was found to be from Alvintzi, announcing his intention, according to one account, of marching to the relief of the garrison down the Adige, whilst Provera made for the place by Legnago. More probably it contained orders from the Emperor, to the effect that if Wurmser were unable to hold out till relief came, then he was to break out to the south, to Tuscany, Rome, and even Naples—a plan which Marmont blames Wurmser for not adopting on his own initiative, alleging that the Marshal could have taken out 15,000 men with cavalry and artillery, and could have put Italy in flames, forcing Bonaparte to make a detachment to the south and so diminishing the resistance to Alvintzi.<sup>1</sup> It seems certain, however, that the Marshal could not have taken such a force, and the garrison were eating their horses. If this order were the contents of the letter, we have the opinion of Bonaparte that it was 'not very dangerous'. The flags taken at Arcola, only four, were sent to Paris with one of Bonaparte's A.D.C.s, Lemarois,<sup>2</sup> who was duly received by the Directory on the 31st December 1796, and was promoted Lieut.-Colonel. Lemarois may not have rejoined at once, as he had been so severely wounded that he could not accompany his General to Egypt in 1798.

<sup>1</sup> Marmont, i. 247-8. Graham, who ought to have known, puts the original garrison at 15,000 to 17,000, reinforced by Wurmser's arrival with 12,000 infantry and 7,000 cavalry, Delavoye, *Graham*, 137. Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 274, gives 10,000 men as available, but this apparently only for operations close to the place.

<sup>2</sup> Général Comte Jean-Léonor-François Le Marois, or Lemarois (1783-1836). Bonaparte had brought him from Paris, after Vendémiaire; *Fastes*, ii. 476-7; *Campagnes du Général Buonaparte*, 217-19.

## VI

### RIVOLI AND THE SURRENDER OF MANTUA

(December 1796 to March 1797)

Brune joins the army. Rivoli. Joubert and Augereau. Second Southern expedition. Victor. Wurmser capitulates to Sérurier.

#### CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

- 1796 9th December. 'Sambre-et-Meuse' arranges an armistice.  
15th–31st December. French expedition to Bantry Bay.  
1797 9th January. Capitulation of Kehl.  
5th February. Capitulation of Huningue.  
14th February. English fleet defeats French and Spanish at Cape St. Vincent.

SEVERAL officers with whom we are concerned joined the army when it was just taking breath after its hairbreadth escape at Arcola. General of Brigade Brune came from Paris: utterly unknown to the troops, to the surprise of every one he was warmly received by Bonaparte, who was always anxious to stand well with the Jacobins and under whom Brune had served at Vendémiaire.<sup>1</sup> Bonaparte treated him most courteously, and gave him a brigade under Masséna. As the army knew, he was making his first real campaign, but the astonishing thing is that we shall find him justifying his favour and winning praise not only from Bonaparte but also from Masséna. On the 1st December Clarke, a General of Division, came from Paris to conduct negotiations with the Austrians. It was intended that he should also watch Bonaparte, whose masterful conduct made the Directory uneasy, but he soon fell under the influence of that General. Another future Minister of Napoleon was Lavalette, who had come in August as A.D.C. to General Baraguey d'Hilliers, in command at Milan and Lombardy, as we have seen;<sup>2</sup> but, anxious to join the active force, Lavalette was about to ask for the command of a company of infantry in the advanced-guard when came the news of Arcola, and his General recommended him to Bonaparte to replace the A.D.C. Muiron, who had been killed at the bridge there. That he gained the appointment

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XII.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 81.



instead of any officer with the army seems strange, and when he joined he was nervous as to the result. The other A.D.C.s at first received him coldly, but Marmont introduced him with kindness. 'On the field of battle I shall be less embarrassed than here,' said Lavalette timidly, with the natural modesty of a Frenchman; and he justified the choice of Bonaparte, remaining a devoted adherent to the end. He probably joined about the 2nd December.

The army now settled down ready for the next attempt of Alvintzi, who hung threateningly at Bassano, and in December it was placed as follows: Joubert with 10,250 men was at Rivoli, holding the Adige valley there; Masséna with 8,850 men was at Verona, guarding the Adige above to Bussolengo, Brune having a brigade of two regiments, 3,074 strong, in the division, and Lieut.-Colonel Suchet commanding the 1st battalion of the 18th Regiment. The division of Augereau, 8,665 strong, was at Legnago, guarding the lower Adige. Sérurier, with 10,230, blockaded Mantua, having General Dumas under him. Victor, at Castelnovo and Goito, with a brigade of two regiments, the 57th and the 25th Chasseurs, 1,800 strong, formed a reserve either for the active army or for the blockading force, as required; and in addition Dugua at Villafranca had a cavalry reserve of two regiments, 658 strong. A fresh division, under Rey, in which Murat may have had a brigade, and which was 4,156 strong, watched the western shores of Lago di Garda to Salò. This gave an active army, Augereau, Masséna, Joubert, and Rey, of 34,380 men, or, counting the blockading force, 44,610. At head-quarters at Milan with Bonaparte were Berthier, a General of Division and Chief of the Staff, General of Division Clarke, employed in diplomacy, Lieut.-Colonel Bessières, commanding the Guides, and the A.D.C.s Louis Bonaparte, Croisier, Duroc, Junot, Lavalette, Lemarois, Marmont, and Sulkowski. Lannes, a General of Brigade but with his rank not yet confirmed by the Directory, was in command at Bologna with 2,000 men; he was generally chosen for this sort of detached work. With the four divisions in rear, called 'Divisions des Pays Conquis', 9,261 strong, the army numbered 55,871.<sup>1</sup> The active divisions had seventy-eight guns.

<sup>1</sup> Jomini, *Rev.* ix. 262; Duc de Bellune, 125-8. On the 28th December 1796 Bonaparte told the Directory he had 45,100 infantry.

The campaign of Rivoli, the last attempt to relieve Mantua, can only be studied by following minutely the history of each move in the authorities I have given, or, as I intend to do, by giving a mere summary, only sufficient to show what was done by each member of the group with which we are concerned. Bonaparte concluded a Convention at Bologna on the 11th January 1797 with the representative of the Grand-Duke of Tuscany. A threat on Rome had been intended, but the state of the French army was too critical for the Pope to be overawed. Here, apparently on the evening of the 11th, Bonaparte learnt that an Austrian column from Padua had attacked the outposts of Augereau on the 9th January and had driven them in on Legnago. At once he sent Lannes with his men to reinforce Augereau, and he himself started for Roverbella; there he left orders for Sérurier, sent Dugua with the cavalry reserve to join Augereau, and warned Masséna to have his division ready to march in the night down the Adige from Verona to Legnago, where he meant to attack the enemy if they came over the Adige. He started next for Verona. Here he found it was no time to withdraw Masséna, for that General was attacked by another division of the enemy. General Brune, who defended San Michele, outside the town, with a regiment supported by cavalry, made a fine defence, beating off the Austrians and taking 506 prisoners and two guns. He received seven bullets in his clothes without being wounded. Bonaparte was still uncertain where the real stroke of the enemy would be dealt, and I take it that it was now that he kept his carriage, as Marmont tells us, standing with its team at his door for twenty-four hours, uncertain whether to go down the river to Augereau or up it to Joubert, although he was comparatively tranquil about the Rivoli division. So late as the morning of the 13th January Bonaparte, still at Verona, was asking Joubert whether he had more than 9,000 men in his front: if not, then Bonaparte hoped that the attack which he himself would make on the enemy before Verona that day, together with the attack to be made by Joubert, would be successful, when he would have no fear that the enemy might pass the Adige; but dispatches from Joubert made him change his intentions before 3 p.m. At last he understood the situation, at least almost completely. What had happened was that Alvintzi had been warned by Colonel Graham,

who had just escaped from Mantua, that the garrison was at its last gasp, and he was coming down in numerous columns. Bayalitsch with 6,241 men had struck at Verona, whilst Provera with 9,000 men and a pontoon-train had marched from Padua for Legnago to cross the Adige and reach Mantua, join Wurmser, and then fall on the rear of the French opposed to Alvintzi, who with the mass of the army, 28,000 strong, was coming down the Adige valley to crush Joubert. The curious halts made by Provera, and his inaction when he reached the Adige by Legnago, puzzled Augereau, and apparently made Bonaparte believe that either Provera was not in earnest or that he could be dealt with by Augereau.<sup>1</sup> Anyhow, Joubert reported that he was being driven back by Alvintzi, and after escaping from an attempt to surround him he fell back on Rivoli in the afternoon of the 13th January.

Bonaparte's counter-stroke came, swift and sure as that of an eagle. Renouncing any attack on the force opposite Verona, and leaving Augereau at Legnago to himself, he hurried every available man northward to reinforce Joubert or to attack the flanks of Alvintzi. Masséna, leaving two regiments at Verona, was to march for Rivoli and come up on the left of Joubert, whilst Monnier with the 18th was to strike farther west for Garda, on the lake. Masséna himself was to go to Rivoli as soon as possible, ahead of his troops. Victor with the 57th was to march from Castellaro north to Villafranca, but he was far off and obviously would be late. Rey, leaving General Murat at Salò, was also ordered up, through Castelnovo, to follow the crests of the hills on the left of Rivoli. Murat, sending his cavalry on Castelnovo, was to reconnoitre northwards, and if nothing presaged a dangerous irruption of the enemy on the morrow—that is, a repetition of the march of Quasdanowich's column in the Castiglione campaign—he was to embark at 3 a.m. on the 14th, and, landing above Torri,<sup>2</sup> he was to turn the enemy's column coming down the eastern side of the lake; whatever happened he was to land and help the other divisions. Cavalry was also sent on Rivoli, and then at 8 p.m. on the 13th January Bonaparte himself with his staff left Verona to join Joubert. Colonel and A.D.C. Marmont, who was with Augereau, watching

<sup>1</sup> For Augereau's movements see p. 133 sq.

<sup>2</sup> North of Garda, on the eastern shore of the lake.



his movements at Legnago, was ordered to rejoin head-quarters. Bonaparte reached Joubert at 2 a.m. on the 14th January, and found the division formed in front of Rivoli on the plateau between Monte Baldo and the valley of the Adige. In front were the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Austrian columns, some 12,726 men; on the French left was the 1st, Lusignan's, column, which by its flanking movement had driven Joubert back; and down by the Adige on either bank were the 5th and 6th columns. The Austrians, though superior in numbers, were under certain disadvantages; their ranks had been filled in haste, so that their battalions were in some cases composed of men of different nationalities, with few ties between them. Also the roads, or rather paths, by which the first four columns had advanced, were so bad that only a few mountain guns and a handful of cavalry accompanied them, the mass of the guns and horse being down in the Adige valley with the 5th and 6th columns, whilst the French could bring up all arms on to the field. Further, every detail of the march had been drawn up with minute care by the Austrian staff, and each man had started carrying the food necessary for the time calculated for the expedition; but, exhausted by their climbs amid snow and ice, the men, though they ended their march at the right place every day, consumed their rations at a quicker rate than was allowed for.<sup>1</sup> Still, the great mass of their fires blazed around the French in the cold frosty night as Bonaparte viewed them.

He found Joubert writing orders in the church at Rivoli by the light of a candle, and at once ordered him to attack. (At Saint Helena he said to General Bertrand: 'Take this watch; it struck two in the morning when I ordered Joubert to attack Rivoli.') Then a long struggle began, the details of which are not for me, as I concern myself only with the future Marshals. Joubert commanded on the right, Berthier taking the centre, and Masséna, when his troops came up, the left. It is amusing to read how even the French, skilled at manœuvring in broken order, still were governed by the drill of the parade ground. At a moment when all seemed in confusion, 'Well, Joubert,' cried Berthier, 'where will you start your line?' 'There,' replied Joubert, placing two men as points and then changing front on them. Masséna came up ahead of his men

<sup>1</sup> Duc de Bellune, 141-3.

and had a narrow escape, for when one regiment of Joubert's, the 85th, which had already misbehaved under Vaubois in November, was ordered to charge, it broke, and Masséna, riding in amongst the fugitives and using the flat of his sword on them, could not rally them, so that the advancing enemy called on him: 'Prisoner, prisoner.' He rode off whistling, to meet his own splendid regiments. 'What fine troops', says Thiébault, 'the 32nd and the 75th were! It was the first time that I had seen corps of the division of Masséna march on the enemy, but in their countenances was something so firm and so formidable that one felt that to march with them for a combat was to march for a success.' Or, as Berthier put it, it seemed as if they were making a mere parade manœuvre, not an advance to throw death amongst the enemy. The march of Masséna's division had been as rapid as possible. Leaving the 18th Light, the 25th, and the 5th Dragoons, to hold Verona, he had sent Monnier with the 18th of the line, in accordance with Bonaparte's order, to Garda to cover Joubert's left. The 32nd and 75th with the cavalry were formed under Rampon, Brune, and Leclerc before the Porta Nuova at midnight on the 13th, when Masséna addressed them: 'My friends, Bonaparte demands a last effort from you to annihilate the remains of the Austrian army, who have dared to come again and measure themselves against the Republicans. Afterwards we shall be the masters of the country. We shall go to Vienna to dictate terms of peace. Your glory will be unequalled.' Two guns of 11 pounds, one of 5, and two three-pounders, were brought along. In the darkness the column went on its weary way, exhausted men throwing themselves down by the side of the road, and all in silence, for talking, and even smoking, was forbidden. Passing through the silent Bus-solengo, the troops halted on the first heights for rest, but the sound of guns at Rivoli was heard and a messenger from Bonaparte arrived, 'Quick, men and guns: we shall soon be outflanked in Rivoli.' The enemy's musketry now mingled with the roll of the drums which called the tired men on, and, fatigue forgotten, the division formed for victory.

One great danger to the French was the encircling advance of the 1st Austrian column under Lusignan, which marched round on the hills above and to the east till a line stood behind them, cutting them off. Marmont, coming up from the division of

Augereau, was fired at and only just got through. Now surged on to the field the 18th Regiment, from Garda, led by Monnier, with colours flying and drums beating. 'Brave 18th,' cried Bonaparte riding up, 'I know you, the enemy will not stand before you.' 'En avant!' cried the men, and Masséna said, 'Comrades, in front of you are 4,000 young men belonging to the richest families of Vienna; they have come with post-horses as far as Bassano: I recommend them to you.' With a roar of laughter the regiment advanced (Lieut.-Colonel Suchet, let us hope, with its first battalion), making for the crests on which Lusignan stood. Brune led on the 75th Regiment; other columns were formed, the guns were turned on to the hills, and the Austrian column which a moment before had been applauding its own success was for the most part captured. Lusignan himself went off on the western slopes of the mountains, but drawing near the lake, he found General Murat there with the 12th Light, holding Garda and Torri, so that he had great difficulty in escaping. The columns of the enemy in the Adige valley, seeing Joubert above them heavily engaged, attempted to climb up on to the plateau, and could they have done this they would then have brought their cavalry and the much-needed guns against the French. 'On the success of this enterprise depended the result of the battle,' wrote Bonaparte. Reaching the level, the head of the column began removing the guns from the French entrenchments, but Berthier, left in charge of the centre by Bonaparte, directed a terrible infantry fire on them and sent cavalry to charge them, whilst Joubert, whose horse had been killed under him, led on his men musket in hand. Two Austrian wagons exploded, causing confusion in the cramped body of the enemy, and the crushed column sank back into the gulf of the river, so that the French only had to deal with the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th columns, some 12,000 men, exhausted by their marches.

All this time Rey's<sup>1</sup> division of some 4,000 men had been absent; this fact shows how much depended on the Generals as individuals. He is often said to have arrived near Rivoli but to have been checked by seeing the encircling Austrians, and there is a picturesque story of Junot, ordered by Bonaparte to cut his way through and fetch Rey, lashing his hat on with one handkerchief and his sword to his right hand with another, and starting

<sup>1</sup> Phipps, iii. 60 and note 1, for his previous record.



off, only to return within twenty minutes repulsed and confused. This is not quite fair to Rey, although the accounts of his movements do not agree. He had been ordered from Desenzano to Valeggio, on the Mincio, to be there early, and obviously to be ready to continue his march. He delayed his movement for four hours, believing that Murat at Salo was about to be attacked by a force superior to his division, and only started at 8 a.m. on the 14th, on learning that this was a mistake. Directed at one time to move south to Roverbella to reinforce Sérurier before Mantua, he was then called back to Castelnovo to check Provera and any column trying to turn Rivoli from the east. Then, ordered to march on the threatened points, he hung at Castelnovo, not seeing any Austrians and sending to Bonaparte for orders. It was only at 3 p.m. that he moved northwards, receiving directions from the A.D.C. Louis Bonaparte. It was 9 p.m. and the battle was over when he reached Rivoli, to be blamed for not marching to the sound of the guns; for punishment he was detached to escort the prisoners.<sup>1</sup> Had Masséna been of this stuff, Bonaparte would have been crushed at Rivoli.

At two in the afternoon, during the fight, Bonaparte had learnt, apparently from Marmont, that Provera was throwing a bridge over the Adige at Anghiari. Determined to prevent him reaching Mantua, Bonaparte left to Joubert the task of finishing with Alvintzi, and started with his staff and with Masséna<sup>2</sup> for Castelnovo, taking the 18th, 32nd, and 75th Regiments, as well as the 57th, under Victor, which had only reached Rivoli at night; he also took three cavalry regiments. Joubert with the rest of the troops had to face the Austrians, who were weakened only by the loss of Lusignan's column. Nevertheless he was ordered to attack on the 15th January, with his own troops and those of Rey, whilst Murat from Torri was to strike across the hills to gain the defile of the Corona in rear of the enemy.

In the first battle of Rivoli Bonaparte had defeated Alvintzi: in the second, on the 15th January, Joubert crushed him. The

<sup>1</sup> *Corr. Nap.* ii, No. 1374, 1376, 1380, 1384; Gachot, 233-6; Marmont, ii, 253-6; Koch, *Masséna*, ii, 300-1.

<sup>2</sup> Bonaparte in his *Memoirs*, *Corr. Nap.* xxix. 217, says that he left Masséna with Joubert, but this is obviously a mistake; see, for example, Roguet, i, 327; otherwise Masséna would have commanded at Rivoli during the second battle, on the 15th.

Austrians advanced, but fought without heart and were driven back, their retreat soon becoming a rout. The mass of what had been the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th columns made for the narrow pass of the Madonna della Corona, but Murat, joining Vaux, who had two regiments, cut them off there, and Vial with another body seized Ferrara farther north, so that some five or six thousand men surrendered. Alvintzi himself escaped almost alone through the gorges, and the two columns in the Adige valley retreated up the river in some confusion. 'I have followed exactly your arrangements for the attack of the Corona,' wrote Joubert to Bonaparte; 'the success has been beyond all hope: three guns, 4,000 or 5,000 prisoners, and Alvintzi himself precipitated down the rocks and flying like a skirmisher up the Adige, without any soldiers—such is the summary of this affair.' As Bonaparte wrote, in the friendly style which he adopted towards his young lieutenant, after further success by Mantua which I shall relate in a moment: 'Here we are in the same positions as we were! M. Alvintzi cannot say as much.' Later, in sending Joubert to France, he gave all the credit of Rivoli to him.<sup>1</sup> As Sainte-Beuve says of the young General, 'Certainly, had he lived, no one would have had more right than he to be Duc de Rivoli', a title which, in his default, fell to Masséna. Colonel Graham, who had succeeded in getting out of Mantua about Christmas Day 1796, and who had accompanied Alvintzi, was bitterly disappointed at this failure. On the 11th January 1797 he had written, just before advancing to Rivoli, flattering himself that he would be in Mantua in a few days. On the 16th January it was a very different tale: 'With half our army we had beaten Bonaparte, and must have destroyed him with the other half but for the damnable stupidity of our Generals and the disgraceful and unaccountable terror that seized our men; though this unique opportunity was lost, we should not have been so shamefully licked in the end had any decision been taken in time.' However, Graham saved his own mule and kit.

I now turn to the division of Augereau on the lower Adige and to that of Sérurier before Mantua, beginning again at the arrival of Provera before Legnago, which means covering some of the same ground again. Provera, with 9,000 men and a pontoon-train,

<sup>1</sup> 'General Joubert, who commanded at the battle of Rivoli.' *Corr. Nap.* iii, No. 2376, 16th November 1797.

from Padua passed through Este, and on the 8th January met the advanced posts of Augereau soon after Saletto and drove them back westward on Bevilacqua, taking two guns. Here the French stood, and about noon Augereau himself brought up two more battalions, but was outflanked, and retired. On the 9th he was forced right back on Legnago and Bonavigo.<sup>1</sup> So far the Austrian programme had been carried out exactly, and now it remained for Provera to cross the Adige as soon as possible; but, in the first place, it had been impossible to bring up the pontoons over the bad roads, and when this difficulty was overcome, then came the hesitations which seem always to have affected the Austrian Generals in Italy. A plan was made to seize Legnago by surprise, by means of sending some men in disguise to open the gates for a party to be pushed forward; this failed. On the 10th January Provera remained motionless; on the 11th he reconnoitred Anghiari, above Legnago, to select a point for his bridge; on the 12th he ordered the bridge to be laid there, but at once countermanded this. All this delay gave the French the time which they required so urgently to prepare their resistance. Augereau ordered up one of Victor's regiments, the 57th, from Goito, and, remembering Arcola, placed most of his division at first at Ronco; but, though it was unlikely that an enemy wishing to get to Mantua would cross below Legnago, still he thought Provera might intend to strike south-east for Ferrara, and therefore he spread his division a good deal along the river from Zevio down to Badia, where a whole regiment was posted. Anghiari was occupied by 200 men. As he told Bonaparte in a letter of the 26th January, explaining how Provera got past: 'When a division is scattered over an extent of 30 leagues, it requires more than a quarter of an hour to collect it.' The inaction of Provera puzzled Augereau, but in rear Bonaparte was hurrying up reinforcements to him. On the 11th January Rivaud with a regiment and some cavalry, followed by Lannes, who left Bologna with his 2,000 men at 4 p.m. on the 11th, was making for Badia, where he was to arrive rather late on the 12th January. As we have seen, the cavalry reserve was also ordered to Legnago, and even the division of Masséna was ready to start for that point from Verona. A little more delay and Bonaparte would have rushed from Legnago to strike

<sup>1</sup> A little higher up the Adige, on the left bank.



Provera with practically all his force. However, sending Marmont to remain with Augereau, Bonaparte went to Verona on the 12th January, and finding the place attacked by Bayalitsch, changed his mind and intended to attack that General with the division of Masséna. Next, as I have already said, by another change, on the 13th January he called off most of the reinforcements intended for Augereau, including the 57th Regiment and even a battalion at Zevio, and started to join Joubert at Rivoli, leaving Augereau, reinforced by Lannes, to deal with Provera. Augereau was to attack if the enemy in front of him weakened.

On the 13th January Provera at last moved. Bayalitsch, who had attacked Verona, was drawing back eastward on Villanova, but at the request of Provera he made a diversion on Arcola. That morning Provera himself made a demonstration of crossing at one place, but in the afternoon the pontoons were changed to a point opposite Anghiari, and he began crossing there. A small party of French under Bon attacked, but was driven off, and by daylight on the 14th January Provera was over on the right bank. Guieu now attacked with some infantry and Dragoons, but after some success he was driven off up the river. The arrangements of Augereau, as Napoleon says, were bad. It was difficult to prevent an enemy with a pontoon-train from passing a river: an army covering a siege should be ready in such a case to gain a position intermediate between the place and the river, before the enemy can reach it. Augereau, however, now was cut off from the brigades of Bon and of Guieu, and from the reserve cavalry of Dugua which was coming up to join him. While his troops to the north of Provera attacked the Austrians, he formed those still with him, including those of Lannes, which had now joined, in two columns; he himself made straight for Anghiari, sending Point with the rest to cut off the rear-guard of Provera, and he succeeded in catching the infantry, some 1,500 men, though the cavalry cut their way through. Augereau misunderstood the situation in the most extraordinary manner. Whilst Bonaparte, the moment he heard that Provera was crossing, strained every nerve to prevent him reaching Mantua, all Augereau's attention was directed simply to cutting off his retreat, and the whole day of the 14th January was passed in doing this and in destroying the Austrian bridge; while on the 15th, when Provera was before Saint-

Georges, Augereau was making reconnaissances on the left bank of the Adige and contenting himself with a pious hope that he might learn next day, that is, on the 16th, of Provera's final defeat. It was only on hearing a cannonade towards Mantua, which was the first attempt of Provera on Saint-Georges, that he sent Lannes and Duphot there, and then only with 1,600 infantry, two squadrons of cavalry, an eight-pounder and a howitzer. He was calmly writing to Bonaparte on the 15th January in the most detached manner, 'Give me, I beg, news of the day about Mantua,' when he received a letter from Berthier to General Guieu, no doubt the letter in which it was said, 'As to General Augereau, the Commander-in-Chief thinks he will have got more quickly than the enemy to Castellaro and all the lower Molinella.' Then indeed he set off with his division for Castellaro and Mantua. With a swagger that was singularly misplaced at the moment, he announced that, the enemy not being on either bank of the Adige, he thought he could move where required by the presence of that enemy. 'I shall make it seen by this that I know how to draw advantage from every circumstance': this too when he was proving how little he did know of that, for he had let Provera gain a whole march or more on him, and he only came up at the end of the fighting.<sup>1</sup>

On the 15th January Provera, who had passed the night at Nogara, marched on Mantua, capturing some carriages in one of which were notes and plans of Bonaparte. This capture by the Austrians of the *fourgon* with the papers of Bonaparte should be noted, as when Desaix came to Italy later and asked for information about the details of these campaigns, he found much mystery made of the matter and was told that a 'fourgon précieux' with all the papers concerning two months of the most important campaign had been lost at this time.<sup>2</sup> Bonaparte naturally was annoyed, and, declaring that the commune of Castellaro had not only let the *fourgon* be captured, but had plundered it themselves, put a contribution of 800,000 francs on them; but this was to reimburse the staff officers for the property which they had lost.<sup>3</sup> Provera's advanced-guard made

<sup>1</sup> Augereau in *Corr. Nap. Italie*, ii. 387-8. See also Clausewitz (1796), 269. The other authorities, Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 307; Jomini, *Rev.* ix. 290; and *Vict.-et-Conq.* viii. 52, who all make Augereau follow up Provera, are disproved by this statement of Augereau, which I follow.

<sup>2</sup> Bonnal, *Desaix*, 129.

<sup>3</sup> *Corr. Nap.* ii, No. 1406. Trolard, *Rivoli*, p. 14, note 2 treats this as happen-

for Saint-Georges, the outpost on the east of Mantua, which was held by Miollis.<sup>1</sup> Then occurred an incident which ought to be dear to our Clothing Department, whose thoughts in my time ran most on 'part-worn clothing'. The Austrian Hussars who led the way were dressed like the French 1st Hussars, the old 'Berchény',<sup>2</sup> and as they got near the gateway they saw that the French, engaged in carrying in wood, mistook them for their own horse, so they advanced slowly, not to cause suspicion; but as they got close up an old Sergeant noticed that their clothes were new. Now new uniforms were uncommon amongst the armies of the Republic, and recognizing the mistake, he shouted out: 'The enemy!' and ran to close the gate, just in time. Miollis was summoned to surrender but replied that he knew how to fight, not to capitulate, and Provera, abandoning the attempt, turned to his right for La Favorita, the post north of Mantua.

In drawing off from Saint-Georges Provera set his drummers to work to let Wurmser inside Mantua know of his arrival, but the old Marshal had been taken with an untimely fit of incredulity. Apparently the firing about Anghiari had not been heard by the garrison, although that at Arcola in November had been, and he took the sound of the engagement round Saint-Georges to be a French trick to draw him out of his works; but at last, at about noon on the 15th, he realized the situation, and all the bells of the town were rung to let Provera know that he was recognized. Instead, however, of launching out of the town in support of the relieving force, with true Austrian slowness the sortie had to be put off till the next day, and Provera and Wurmser lost their chance of having to deal only with part of Sérurier's division on the left of the Mincio. Then a strange thing occurred: what with the slowness of Provera, the unpreparedness

ing in September 1796 on the rush of Wurmser into Mantua, when there was an engagement near Castellaro.

<sup>1</sup> Probably the General of that name who had been in 'Pyrénées Occidentales', and if so one of the few Generals from that army who afterwards distinguished themselves. Phipps, iii. 210 and note 2.

<sup>2</sup> 'Pelisse, dolman et culotte de drap bleu céleste foncé; parements garance; surtout et gilet bleu céleste foncé . . . Manteau de drap vert. Susane, *Cav. française*, ii. 239, 245-52; Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 307-8; Duc de Bellune, 174-5. Napoleon says (*Corr. Nap.* xxix. 217-18) that the cloaks were white. None of the old regiments of Hussars seem to have had white cloaks, see Susane, *Cav. française*, ii. 238-41.



of Wurmser, the blundering of Augereau, and the swiftness of Bonaparte, the fate of Mantua and of Provera was to be decided by the regiments which had been fighting at Rivoli, more than thirty-three miles north, on the 14th January, the day on which Provera had got across the Adige some twenty-seven miles off and four days after he might have crossed. The history of the 18th Regiment, that of Suchet, will give a good example of the march of the four regiments from Rivoli on Mantua. One hour was first given them at Rivoli to eat and rest: they had done neither since they left Verona on the 13th. Then they set off and only halted, exhausted, at Villafranca, where they were given bread and wine and the stragglers re-joined. Now the march was continued, enlivened by songs of their triumphs: 'We had our poets; they were grotesque, but they had the gift of amusing us,' says Pelleport. Roverbella was reached at 6 p.m. on the 15th, and Bonaparte gave the leading regiments, the 18th and 57th, the latter under General Victor, two hours' repose, and then put them in motion again. At midnight the songs died away as the weary men gained the works before Mantua. The other regiments, the 32nd and 75th, were in rear.<sup>1</sup>

On the 16th January 1797 was fought the battle of La Favorita, taking its name from a palace of the Dukes of Mantua near the field. Provera had halted for the night on the Due Castelli road, and had advanced with his right before La Favorita when at 5 a.m. on the 16th Wurmser sent out two columns from the citadel, one of 1,000 and the other of 1,200, on San Antonio on the left and on Montada on the right.<sup>2</sup> Sebottendorf, who commanded, was to make his junction with Provera by Montada, and the fire from Mantua was to cover the advance. General Dumas was in observation towards San Antonio with 1,000 men, but the village was taken by the troops from Mantua, when Victor, passing with the 18th and 57th on his way to La

<sup>1</sup> Duc de Bellune, 165-6, 178-9; Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 308, makes Sérurier send Victor with the 18th, 57th, and the 25th Chasseurs to La Favorita when Provera advanced there on the 15th, but that must be impossible, for Bonaparte, mentioning the 18th and 57th as at Roverbella, says at 8 p.m. on the 15th: 'The troops which arrived this evening at Roverbella are worn out' (*extenuée*) 'with fatigue, and require two hours' rest.' He mentions their marching again at 10 p.m.; *Corr. Nap.* ii, Nos. 1390-2, 1401; and see Pelleport, i. 82-3.

<sup>2</sup> See map on p. 57.

Favorita, retook it with the 57th, reinforced Dumas with the 18th, and drove the sortie back into the citadel. Meanwhile Sérurier with 1,500 men was holding La Favorita against Provera. Victor next attacked Provera with the 57th, supported by Dugua with the reserve cavalry; and Masséna, arriving with the 32nd under Rampon and the 75th under Brune, turned the right, whilst Miollis sallied out from Saint-Georges against the left. The troops of Augereau also were at last coming up from the east, Lannes and Guieu attacking Provera's rear and Augereau moving by Castellaro. At about half-past eleven in the morning Provera saw that his case was hopeless, and communicated with Miollis at Saint-Georges. In the end an honourable capitulation was arranged between Sérurier and Provera, by which at 2 p.m. the Austrian column laid down its arms, the French getting 7,000 men, 22 guns, a pontoon-train and a convoy of the food and cattle intended for Mantua.

This final clash of arms under Mantua, where the reward of such long marching and hard fighting was reaped, seems to have exhilarated Bonaparte, who now was generous alike to friend and foe. 'Le respectable Général Provera', he told the Directory, 'asked to capitulate: he counted on our generosity, and did not deceive himself'; indeed it was the second time he had become prisoner.<sup>1</sup> His officers preserved their swords and baggage, and returned to their country till exchanged. Masséna was styled: 'L'enfant chéri de la victoire', this phrase occurring in its first form when Berthier in his bulletin, describing him leading on the 32nd at Rivoli, says, 'Masséna, enfant gâté de la victoire, marche à la tête'. Victor was praised: Berthier wrote of him at La Favorita, . . . 'who displayed on this occasion as much energy as talent', and Bonaparte applied for the rank of General of Division for him, promoting him himself in the meanwhile. The talents of Victor are often sneered at, especially amongst the misfortunes of later days, by those who assert that, originally a drummer (which he was not), he was always getting beaten; but to do this is to forget how much he had already done, and in what a capital school. Long before, Augereau had written of him, 'General Victor is a brilliant soldier, but he has no education'.<sup>2</sup> It is one of the curiosities of the Marshalate,

<sup>1</sup> The first was on 14th April 1796, at Cosseria.

<sup>2</sup> See Phipps, iii. 77-9, for Victor's early life.

and perhaps due to this last defect, that he should not have received the bâton till 1807, and then at the instance of Lannes, now his junior, but who then had been Marshal for three years. Generals of Brigade Vial, Brune, and Bon were reported to the Directory as having 'especially distinguished themselves'. Brune really had distinguished himself on these hard-fought fields, in a way which seems wonderful considering his past history, but we must remember that he had the fine troops of Masséna to carry his fortunes. His escape in the struggle before Verona on the 12th January, when seven bullets struck his clothes, seems to have much impressed Bonaparte, who, a fortunate man himself, was a strong believer in luck in such matters. Not only did he mention the incident in his report to the Directors: 'The grenadiers of the 75th took the guns with the bayonet: they had at their head General of Brigade Brune, who had his clothes pierced by seven balls;' but he also told Joséphine, 'General Brune received eight balls in his clothes without being touched; this is marvellous.' No doubt this increased the favour with which he looked on that tall General. Berthier too was praised: speaking of the moment at Rivoli when the left, thrown back by the enemy, retired on the centre, Bonaparte told the Directors: 'General Berthier, Chief of the Staff, whom I had left there, displayed on this occasion the bravery of which he has so often given proof in this campaign.' Bonaparte always spoke of bravery, but Berthier had been more than brave. Left by Bonaparte in the centre with the 14th Regiment while the commander went to rally the left, he had held his ground though the right fell back on him; and he had prevented the enemy carrying off two guns which they had already seized, by the rather desperate method of directing a fire on them, which not only killed the party of the enemy round them but also the gun-teams, so that the pieces could not be moved. Later too it was he who directed the charge of the cavalry of Lasalle, which threw the head of the column of Quasdanowich back into the ravine of the Adige, thus preventing it throwing its weight on to the field with the rest of the army. His coolness, allied with the fire of Joubert, had done much for the victory at Rivoli. He was not a strategist, but neither was he a mere clerk. Nor were the men forgotten who had formed the toiling columns. 'La terrible 57me demi-brigade n'était arrêtée par rien,' Bonaparte



wrote, and later placed the phrase on their colours. 'All the regiments have covered themselves with glory, and especially the 32nd, 57th, and 18th of the Line, commanded by General Masséna, who in three days have beaten the enemy at Saint-Michel' (Verona), 'Rivoli, and La Favorita. The Roman Legions, it is said, made twenty-four miles a day; our regiments do thirty and fight in the interval.' Then he summed up his spoils: in four days his army had fought two pitched battles and six combats; it had taken nearly 25,000 prisoners, twenty colours, and sixty guns, besides killing and wounding at least 6,000 men.

Lieut.-Colonel Bessières, the Commandant of the Guides, was sent on the 20th January 1797 to Paris with eleven colours taken at Rivoli and La Favorita, Bonaparte describing him to the Directory as 'an officer distinguished by his bravery, and by the honour which he possesses of commanding a company of brave men who have always seen the enemy fly before them, and who by their intrepidity have rendered us very essential services in the last campaign'. Bessières was received by the Directory in state on the 18th February. The Minister of War presented him, and the captured flags were borne behind him. He made an address in the style of the period: 'The sweep of the Imperial eagle has again been checked on the Adige' . . . Referring to the young *noblesse* from Vienna who had served in the last campaign, he said, 'The issue of the combat has proved that the bucklers and lances of Chivalry can do nothing against Republican bayonets.' Then came what was customary with the Armée d'Italie—abuse of the vile partisans who calumniated it: 'The Armée d'Italie is above their impure vociferations: its proud attitude, its love for liberty, make the enemies of the Republic tremble.' The President of the Directory replied to the 'generous warrior', expressing the readiness of the Directory to die rather than be affected by the seditious cries of the perverse men who were sold to the enemies of their country, and a 'baiser fraternel' closed the proceedings. What seems curious is that Bessières got no reward. Perhaps his promotion to Lieut.-Colonel on the 4th September 1796 was thought too recent for his further advancement. Probably he did not remain long in the Capital, and was back with his Guides in time for the final campaign.

Amidst this blaze of triumph and rewards, one officer was disgraced. General Alexandre Dumas, who had been commanding a division of the force blockading Mantua, had managed to quarrel with Sérurier, as he had with Kellermann when he served in the 'Alpes' under him. Some time before Provera arrived the two Generals had been in conflict about a question of authority, natural enough when we remember that Dumas had been in command till Sérurier rejoined. When Provera approached, Sérurier informed Dumas that he thought the enemy might try to cross the Adige below Mantua, at Formigosa or even at Governolo, and that if pressed he would retire on Goito. Dumas replied insolently, 'Retire to the devil if you like, I don't care; as for me, I may be killed but I shall not retire'; which was a silly bravado when the strength of the force brought by Provera was not known. Sérurier reported this to Bonaparte, who on the evening before the battle of La Favorita<sup>1</sup> reprimanded Dumas sharply, telling him that he would have had him shot if such a letter had been addressed to himself. Then Sérurier in his report of the battle praised the troops of Dumas but made no special mention of the General, and Berthier in his account simply said that Dumas had been in observation; nor did Bonaparte name him. Dumas, who had had one horse killed and another knocked down under him, was furious, and wrote a letter of coarse abuse to Berthier. The day after the battle Bonaparte ordered him to join the division of Masséna, in which he was to command a brigade; and all his complaints, and his accusations against Sérurier for having, as he alleged, decried him, his account of all he had done, and his recalling his seniority and the fact that he had commanded armies, caused no change in the order.

This campaign of Rivoli is a very dramatic one, if it were only for the scene in the bright, clear, cold night, when Bonaparte, arriving at Rivoli, gave orders to Joubert to attack: a scene which dwelt in the memory of the Emperor to the end as much as the 'Sun of Austerlitz'. Then we have what I may call the vignettes: Masséna whistling, as, galloping off for reinforcements, he leaped the rocks to avoid the Austrians, who believed that they had caught him; or Bonaparte amongst his anxious staff, observing the encircling column of Lusignan and reassuring

<sup>1</sup> I follow my authorities, but suspect this took place after the battle.

every one by his calm, 'They are ours'. A model of vigour, daring, and rapidity, this campaign is a lesson to those (and there are now so many) who believe in the all-importance of a 'plan', although they have often seen the first move of the enemy shatter an excellent one. Here short summaries make students believe that the stroke at Rivoli was the immediate conception of Bonaparte; and the crushing results of the second day, won by Joubert under his commander's instructions, are sometimes attributed to the fight under Bonaparte on the 14th January, when Alvintzi was only repulsed.

The twenty-four hours during which Bonaparte's carriage stood at the door, while he was doubtful where to meet the enemy, is only part of the proof of his uncertainties. It is possible that at first, at Bologna, he may have believed that the Austrian force which appeared before Legnago, instead of making for Mantua would only demonstrate as if for that object, really intending to march south into the Romagna. Clausewitz, or his annotator, alleges that Bonaparte feared this 'sérieusement',<sup>1</sup> though I do not know the authority, for when Lannes and other troops from Bologna were sent on Badia, that may well have been done only as the quickest way of reinforcing the right of Augereau, and enabling him to draw his own troops up from there; there is no trace in the *Correspondance* of any fear of a passage except near Legnago or Verona, although, as we have seen, Sérurier thought that Provera might make for the south of Mantua, crossing the Mincio either at Formigosa or still lower at Governolo. This, apparently, would have given him a better chance of reaching Wurmser than if he had got across the Adige near Legnago; but to cross near Badia would have involved too long a circuit afterwards. What is certain is that there were three changes of intention on the part of Bonaparte. First, on the 12th January, if the enemy passed the Adige near Legnago he meant to bring Masséna's division down from Verona to join Augereau, and to crush the force which had passed. Now on this day Provera ought to have crossed: had he done so, it is interesting to think of the result of Bonaparte's plan. For it was not till 3 p.m. on the 13th January that he determined to march for Rivoli, and had he set off for Legnago on the 12th he would have been too late to save the position of Rivoli even if he had

<sup>1</sup> Clausewitz (1796), 268, note 1.



turned back on hearing of Joubert's distress. Would he have gone on to crush Provera, or have turned back on Alvintzi? Secondly, on the morning of the 13th he intended to attack the enemy in front of Verona with the division of Masséna. This, he thought, would prevent Provera crossing, and I presume that Provera's hesitations had made Bonaparte disbelieve that the attempt on Legnago was serious. Had he come out of Verona and become heavily engaged, he would have been too late to succour Joubert, but we may assume that he would nevertheless have joined that General, leaving Provera to Augereau. All this, however, depended on whether Joubert were heavily attacked by, as Bonaparte put it, more than 9,000 men. Once assured of that, in the afternoon of the 13th January, he struck north for Rivoli, which is the third change of intention. All this was most wise and scientific, but it is far from the omniscience so often attributed to successful commanders. Had Provera crossed a day earlier, or Alvintzi been a little more sluggish, a very different situation would have been presented. Hamley points out how in 1806 Napoleon in three days made three erroneous calculations of the enemy's doings, but the right direction had been given to his movements at the outset, and he won. In the Rivoli campaign we have Bonaparte at his best: the General of changes and emergencies, ready to turn in any direction, and to strike hard, yet not too deeply to prevent his swinging round on another adversary. Imagine Moreau at Verona on the 13th January!

The change made in the positions of two Generals of Division is, for us, the great result of this campaign. Augereau had hitherto stood almost, if not altogether, on the same footing as Masséna, and the cries of some of his troops on the field of the first battle of Castiglione show that he was considered the leader of that part of the army which came from the 'Pyrénées Orientales'.<sup>1</sup> After his failure both as tactician and strategist at Legnago he must have taken a lower grade. It is true that Bonaparte does not seem to have given him instructions how to meet, at some distance behind the river, any large force which might cross over, but the immediate assumption by Bonaparte that he would try to do so proves that the Saint Helena criti-

<sup>1</sup> 'Nous avons sauvé l'Armée des Pyrénées; nous sauverons celle d'Italie.' Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 466.

cism was no mere afterthought.<sup>1</sup> Augereau seems to have excused his failure to stop the crossing by the dissemination of his division, but Provera's delays gave him time to concentrate round Legnago. Still, it is his extraordinary conduct after the crossing which discredits him, for he seems to have looked on his work as being that of a wire fence: once cut through, all he had to do was, he thought, to repair it and prevent further crossing. All this is very important, as it gave a test of his generalship when left to himself; and it is probable that his exposure of his incapacity now had very much to do with the conduct of Bonaparte later in the year, when, learning that Augereau was placed in command of all the forces on the Rhine, he made peace rather than attempt a campaign with such a colleague. It is true that Augereau was selected to take to Paris the trophies of Mantua, but he had been ill after Arcola and may have required a rest, whilst Marmont suggests that there was a touch of malice in the choice: 'This is one of the instruments with which I have conquered.' As Augereau declined, Joubert rose. He had been given the largest division and the most important post, and he had fully justified his promotion. Bonaparte's confidence in him had been great, for Joubert's opinion on the numbers in front of him was all-important to the proper meeting of Alvintzi, whilst the handing over to him of the task of dealing with Alvintzi after the first day of Rivoli was a further proof of the trust put in him, fully repaid by the shattering blow he dealt. But in Bonaparte's letters to him there is more than trust, there is a note of personal liking absent from those to, say, Masséna or Augereau, and to be found later in those to Marmont. This is natural, for Masséna and Augereau were men of well-established position when they passed under Bonaparte, and either could well have been given the command instead of him: Joubert might be considered his own creation. Also, neither Masséna, justly proud of himself, nor the braggart Augereau, could have had much to endear them personally to their young commander; whilst the impulsive, obedient Joubert, lacking self-confidence but ready to face any danger at which he were launched, was a man to be almost loved. His reference to 'Caesar and his fortunes', must have been pleasant reading to a commander now wondering where Fortune would lead him. It was something

<sup>1</sup> *Corr. Nap.* ii, No. 1387; *ibid.* xxix, No. 217.

more than a phrase when Bonaparte, going to Egypt and reproached for removing so many leaders, replied, 'I leave you Joubert.' The inner searchings of heart and waverings of Joubert, which were to be fatal at Novi, probably seemed now only natural in one so young. Meanwhile, if it were a proud thing to drive a pair of tigers, the charm of handling a well-mannered thoroughbred was greater.

The victory once won, it was, as Bonaparte told Joubert, a matter of profiting by it, and the three fighting divisions were sent forward. Masséna marched through Vicenza on Bassano, waiting till Augereau, who left Legnago on the 20th January and, passing through Este, entered Padua on the 21st, had moved on the left of the Brenta to Cittadella. Masséna then occupied Bassano on the 26th January, while Augereau struck eastward for Treviso. Masséna pushed up the gorges of the Brenta by Primolano, thus reversing his march in the campaign of September 1796, and reached Borgo di Val Sugana on the 31st January. His advanced-guard, under General Alexandre Dumas, had been sent north up the Piave for Feltre, where Porthos—I mean Dumas—did some of his legendary deeds, but this body was soon withdrawn. Meantime Joubert, to whose division Colonel and A.D.C. Marmont was attached, was sent north up the Adige from Rivoli, clearing the defiles with little resistance and occupying Trent on the 30th January. He even pushed his troops up the Lavis to Segonzano on the 2nd February. Joubert and Masséna were now in communication by the Brenta valley, and as Masséna retook his old cantonments at Bassano, the three fighting divisions were in much the same positions as before the advance of Alvintzi for Arcola, except that Augereau was pushed out to the east instead of being on the lower Adige. Joubert's advance on Trent had been flanked on the west by General Murat, who was at Salò with, apparently, an infantry and a Dragoon regiment. Murat was ordered to send the Dragoons to Joubert and then to embark on the 27th January with some 1,200 men, and, calling at Malesine<sup>1</sup> for orders from Joubert, to land at Torboli at the head of the lake and to flank the march on Roveredo and Trent. When Trent was occupied, Joubert was to place Murat, reinforced if necessary, abreast of Lavis, where his troops were to form the centre

<sup>1</sup> On the east of the lake, about half-way between Torboli and Lavis.



for the formation of the division of Rey, when that General returned from escorting the prisoners taken at Rivoli. Murat, marching by Arco, Drena, and Vezzano, turned Trent, and was then placed on the right of the Adige to watch the Botzen road. I give these details of the duty on which Murat was sent as Bonaparte obviously attached importance to it, and its being allotted to him seems to disprove the allegation that he was under a cloud at this time, for it was of a kind much more likely to bring him distinction than the ordinary work of a General of Brigade with a division.

Bonaparte himself took up again the demonstration against the Pope from which he had been called by the advance of Alvintzi. On the 18th January General Lannes had been sent back to Bologna, to inspect the newly formed Italian troops which Bonaparte intended to use against the weak forces of the Pope. Next day the new General of Division, Victor, was put in command of a French division of some 4,000 infantry and 600 cavalry, and on the 21st January he started for Bologna, Lannes being placed in command of his advanced-guard. At Bologna the Italian division of Lahoz joined this force and by the 1st February Bonaparte, with Berthier, Marmont, Junot, and presumably Duroc, had arrived.<sup>1</sup> On the 2nd February the advance southward began, and almost immediately Victor, always apt to take too much on himself, had to be reprimanded: for interference with the National Guards of Imola, for not having disarmed the inhabitants, for not having established order in rear of the force, and—the constant crime of commanders—for not having sent in his reports of what had been done. When he was a Marshal at the head of an army corps Victor did not keep his men from disorders,<sup>2</sup> and there had been some trouble during the march, not only with the raw Italian levies of Lahoz but also with his own men, partly taken from Augereau and partly from recently arrived reinforcements, besides the grenadiers of Lannes. On the 4th February Bonaparte issued an order from Forlì: 'Soldiers of the division Victor, and of the Transpadane and Cispadane legions, I am not satisfied with you.' In this expedition he wished to avoid all conflicts with the inhabitants, representing his men as advancing

<sup>1</sup> Bessières had been sent to France, and Lavalette to the division of Joubert.

<sup>2</sup> See in 1808 on passage of his 1st Corps through France.

in true French style, with a bayonet in one hand, sure guarantee of victory, and peace and protection for the towns and villages in the other. Now he warned the men that misbehaviour would lose the fruit of their conquests, and ordered any soldier striking or ill-treating an inhabitant to be shot at the head of his regiment; every officer taking horses for his own use was to be cashiered. The next day's orders contained further complaints, and Berthier wrote that, 'The Commander-in-Chief instructs me to inform you that it is a *corps d'armée* which is marching, not a horde of plunderers. Establish order and maintain severe discipline': unpleasant reading for Victor.

It will be noted that in both the expeditions to the South, the one before and the one after the Rivoli campaign, Bonaparte took command himself, rather inconveniently as it turned out when the Rivoli campaign started. This time, when it was known that a raid was to be made into the rich and untouched countries to the south, both Masséna and Augereau at once claimed 'le lucratif honneur' of being charged with this operation. The Armée d'Italie by this date had an eye to something besides military glory; and on this occasion the troops of both Generals took sides in the rivalry and set forth the respective merits of their commanders, being no doubt disgusted when they learnt that the Commander-in-Chief had taken the post himself. So much of his influence with the Directors depended on the cash with which he supplied them that he naturally would wish to keep pecuniary matters in his own hands; but also he was anxious to bring matters with the Pope to a head, without committing himself to a distant expedition against Rome or the hostile Kingdom of Naples, and this must be remembered in judging the conduct of the expedition. Under a too energetic commander the co-operation of the troops so employed might have been lost to the main army.

The Pope, like the King of Naples, had believed that the exhaustion of the French after Arcola was a presage of their final defeat, and, even now, hostile to the Republic, he thought that his troops, with hastily armed levies, could resist the hardy regiments of Bonaparte and could create a second La Vendée. He was soon undeceived. After leaving Imola the French found his levies, some 3,000 or 4,000 men, on the Senio river, about half-way to Faenza; they had entrenched themselves and cut

the bridge, but Lannes, fording the river, filed with the French troops in their rear, while Lahoz with the newly formed Italians charged them in front. Victor's column lost some 40 men killed and wounded, and 400 or 500 of the Papal levies were killed. This was the only real fighting in the expedition, which in that respect had much resemblance to a comic opera. Advancing southwards by the coast road along the Adriatic, the French next found the regular troops of the Pope, not in Ancona, which they could have held for long, but some three miles in front of it, entrenched, and supported by artillery. Colli, the Austrian General who had commanded the Piedmontese in 1796, was nominally in command of the Papal army, but he remained in Rome, and other Austrian officers, doubtless understanding their troops, had retired. The temper of these troops was shown in an amusing manner. Victor's column had arrived before the position on the 9th February, and General Lannes, riding along the sea-shore with Colonel Marmont, suddenly came on a body of 300 horse of the enemy, whose commander ordered his men to draw swords. Lannes had with him two or three officers and eight or ten orderlies only, but although, says Marmont, not a clever man, he was very ready, and like a true Gascon got out of the difficulty by sheer effrontery. Dashing at the commander, he asked in a tone of authority, 'By what right, sir, do you dare to draw swords? Return them at once.' 'Subito,' replied the overawed commander, while Lannes continued, 'Dismount and take these horses to the head-quarters.' 'Adesso,' said the commander, and it was done. That night Lannes told Marmont, 'If I had turned round, the blunderers would have fired some shots at me; I thought there was less risk in getting off through audacity and impudence.' What could be expected from such soldiers?

Victor attacked the position on the 9th, taking the enemy on both flanks; but at the signal gun-shot the Papal troops lay down, and then helped the French into the works, which otherwise they would have found it hard to enter; the strong citadel was occupied without resistance, all the defending infantry, some 1,200 men, being captured. Colonel Junot with the 7th Hussars pursued the horse for two hours in vain. That night Colonel Marmont was sent on with a Dragoon regiment to seize the treasures of the holy House of Loretto, sacred as the



scene of the Visitation of the Virgin and for having been transported to the spot by the Archangel Gabriel. Here a mass of jewels and treasures had been accumulated for ages, and Bonaparte hoped to fill his treasury while also giving Marmont an opportunity for enriching himself. Colli, however, had removed most of the valuables, and Marmont confined himself to placing what he found under seal; still, Bonaparte reported a prize of seven million francs in gold and silver, besides corn, though later he and Marmont put it at one million. The famous image of the Virgin, brought with the House, was removed to Paris, but was restored to the Pope on the conclusion of the Concordat in 1802. Leaving the coast, the column now swung round, moving south-west up the valley of the Chiete by Macerata and Tolentino for Foligno, to which point another column was heading through Siena. Bonaparte remained in rear for a time. At Foligno, having crossed the Apennines and having a clear road for Rome, Victor was halted, for on the 19th February 1797 Bonaparte at Tolentino had concluded a treaty with the Pope, whom he ransomed heavily. The Pope ceded the Legations of Bologna, Ferrara, Romagna, and Avignon, with Ancona, till the general peace, and was to pay thirty million francs in cash or diamonds. Amongst the jewels thus obtained was a large emerald, taken from the Pope's tiara, which Napoleon for a moment thought of giving back to Pius VII in 1804, on the summit of the tiara presented to him after the coronation of the Emperor.<sup>1</sup> Colonel and A.D.C. Junot<sup>2</sup> was sent to Rome on the 19th February with a complimentary letter to the Pope, couched in better terms than were then usual, and later Colonel and A.D.C. Marmont was also sent there, to compliment the Pope and to watch over the performance of the articles of the treaty. Marmont, whose foible it was to believe himself a 'grand seigneur', preened himself on being told that his selection was due to a wish to give the Romans a good idea of the personnel of the French army. He remained a fortnight in the city, well treated by the Papal Government, and only rejoined head-quarters at Gorizia on the 20th March, when the next campaign had begun: as he had done in November 1796 at

<sup>1</sup> Masson, *Sacre de Napoléon*, 1908, 5th edition, Paris, Ollendorf, 236-7; Consalvi, *Mémoires*, Paris, Plon, 1864, 645.

<sup>2</sup> *Corr. Nap.* ii, No. 1512, note 1, says Marmont; but see *Corr. Nap.* xxix. 230.

Arcola. As for Bonaparte, by the 24th February he was back at Bologna and on the 2nd March at Mantua.

Both Victor and Lannes were in Rome in March, when they were presented to the Pope, and all passed to the satisfaction of the Papal Court, the two Generals being present at the Blessing of the Cinders on Ash Wednesday, and even kneeling during the elevation of the Host, a remarkable thing for the period. Still, they made no attempt to kiss the Pope's foot, and His Holiness, probably anticipating this, received them standing. Report, indeed, not improbably true, said that the rough Lannes, when the Pope held out his hand to be kissed, shook it well. It had been intended that Victor should remain in the south until all the articles of the treaty of Tolentino had been carried out, but when the campaign in the north opened Bonaparte wanted the division, and on the 20th March, being himself already at Palma Nova, he assumed that the terms of the treaty had been complied with, and ordered Victor to begin sending his troops, battalion by battalion, secretly to the north. Then from Freisach on the 3rd April, he ordered Victor to take his division by the longest marches possible, and, as we have seen at Rivoli, that meant much, to Treviso. 'We wait', wrote Berthier, 'with impatience for news of his march, and of the date by which we can count on his division; nothing is more pressing.' The only wonder is that he was kept south so long. Lannes had been called to head-quarters on the 26th February.

All this time Mantua had hung like a clog on the army, and those who are apt to disparage the worth of fortifications should remember how this fortress kept the most enterprising of Generals tied to it, and as unable to undertake any distant offensive as a man with one leg secured to a stake; this too when the garrison certainly did not make the best use of their position. Now this was to be changed, and the army was to gain the prize for which, bound to let its enemy choose the field of battle, it had fought so long and suffered so much. 'Raison de guerre', wrote Wurmser to Bonaparte on the 29th January 1797, determined him to offer to surrender Mantua if his garrison with its artillery were to be free to join the Austrian army. Bonaparte replied, apparently from Verona, before starting for Bologna, refusing such terms but offering to allow the Marshal to go free with 500 men chosen by him, on condition that they

did not serve against France for a year ; all the rest of the garrison must become prisoners. He left his instructions with Sérurier. On the afternoon of the 30th January Wurmser sent his son, Colonel Wurmser, to negotiate with Sérurier at Roverbella, expressing his appreciation of Bonaparte's personal offer but still asking that the garrison should be free ; he would promise that it should not serve for a year against France, but even this stipulation he did not wish to be inserted in the capitulation. As the Austrians had intercepted a dispatch from the Directory implying that only the surrender of Mantua would set Bonaparte free to march on Rome, Colonel Wurmser was surprised to hear that it would take four days to get an answer from him, as he was then about to leave Bologna for the south.

So far we are on firm ground : now comes the heroic version of the surrender. Count Klenau came to negotiate with Sérurier at Roverbella, and Bonaparte says he himself went there, and was seated aside, wrapped in his cloak, whilst the terms were fought over on the instructions which he had given to his lieutenant. Then, coming to the table, he wrote his replies to the demands of Wurmser on the margin of the letter, saying to Klenau : ' If Wurmser had even 18 or 20 days' food, and talked of surrendering, he would not deserve any honourable capitulation ; but I respect the age, bravery, and misfortunes of the Marshal. Here are the conditions I grant him : if he delays a fortnight, a month, two months, he will still have the same terms ; he can wait till he is at his last mouthful of bread. I start at once to pass the Po and to march on Rome. You know my intentions : go and tell them to the General.' Klenau, realizing with whom he had to deal, was overpowered by gratitude, and acknowledged that they had only three days' more food. Wurmser, when informed, asked Bonaparte, as he had to pass the Po, to go through Mantua, as the nearest way and one that avoided bad roads, but the route had been settled.<sup>1</sup> Can all this be sheer imagination : one of the things which Napoleon, looking back, would like to have done ? It seems to be utterly uncorroborated and in conflict with dates and contemporary letters. The formal capitulation is signed on the 2nd February. Bonaparte was at Bologna on the 1st February and at Imola, farther south, next day. He was at Verona on the 29th January, so he might have

<sup>1</sup> *Corr. Nap.* xxix. 219-20.



passed by Roverbella, on, say, the 30th, and have settled the terms then; but this is impossible, for on the 1st February he was telling the Directory from Bologna that Wurmser had asked for fresh terms from Sérurier, but that he was writing to Sérurier that he held to his first offer, and, what is in direct opposition to his statement at Saint Helena, that if Wurmser did not agree before the 3rd February he withdrew his offer and would grant the Marshal no other capitulation but to be prisoner with his garrison. On the 3rd February Sérurier sends to Bonaparte the original capitulation of Mantua and the citadel, 'of which you have only received a copy'; and this was unknown till then to Bonaparte, as on that day he told the Directory that Sérurier and Wurmser were on the previous day to have had a conference to fix the date of the execution of the capitulation and to agree on the differences between the terms granted and those proposed. According to the Saint Helena statement everything was decided in a moment some days before. Finally Marmont, who was with him, knows nothing of the interview with Klenau, but describes Bonaparte as authorizing Sérurier to grant very favourable terms, and then starting for Bologna. 'Hardly had a few days passed when Wurmser surrendered.' He goes on to speak of Bonaparte giving up the spectacle of the surrender; but his fixing the date of the instructions to Sérurier seems fatal to the heroic tale.

To return to solid ground: Bonaparte certainly was anxious to render all credit to Wurmser, to whom, he told the Directory, 'Fortune in this campaign has been cruel, but who has not ceased to show a constancy and a courage which History will record.' One cannot but believe that more might have been done by sorties, even if the Marshal could not have broken out to the south for Tuscany; or at least that he might have been quicker in his sallies in November and in January; but Bonaparte, referring to the failure of the sorties, says: 'Besides the very considerable obstacles that were presented to him by our lines of circumvallation, bristling with field pieces, which he had to surmount, he could only act with soldiers discouraged by defeat and weakened by the pestilential maladies of Mantua. The large number of men who always calumniate misfortune will inevitably seek to persecute Marshal Wurmser.' This was generous in the young General, and the physical weakness of

the men of the garrison must be taken into account in judging Wurmser. Berthier had been right when he spoke of the sufferings of the sick in Mantua.<sup>1</sup> Even in November 1796 Graham says, 'The want of hospital stores, and particularly of bark,<sup>2</sup> increased the mortality in an alarming degree; some days the deaths amounted to 150, and they were scarcely ever under half that number. So few men sent into hospital ever rejoined their corps that at last the soldiers actually died at their posts, having concealed their complaints in order to avoid being condemned to go into hospital, which they considered a warrant of death.' This dread of Austrian hospitals was common enough in the first wars of the Revolution. Dellard, who was taken prisoner by the Austrians at Templeneuve in 1794 and sent down the Danube with other captives on rafts, says that a decked boat called the Infirmary, which accompanied them for the sick, had such an atmosphere that any one entering it was struck by a sort of pest, and even the doctors would not go in, only administering medicines through port-holes. 'No one dared to acknowledge himself ill, lest he should be exposed to the effects of this centre of destruction.'<sup>3</sup>

The terms of the capitulation, signed by Sérurier and Wurmser on the 2nd February 1797 at San Antonio, were simple enough. Wurmser, with his staff, all the Generals, 200 cavalry, 500 infantry, and any particular individuals chosen by the Marshal, and with two twelve-pounders, two six-pounders, and two howitzers, their ammunition and detachments, were not to be prisoners, but were not to serve against the French army for three months. The rest of the garrison were to be prisoners of war, and were to lay down their arms and colours on the *glacis*, officers keeping their swords and the men their packs and valises. The troops were to be sent by Padua to Treviso for exchange. The garrison defiled before Sérurier, to whom Bonaparte left this well-won honour: 16,324 men, the remains of 30,475, becoming prisoners.<sup>4</sup> Sérurier was told that he was intended to command an active division, but was to retain the Mantuan command for a time. He was informed of the

<sup>1</sup> See p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. quinine.

<sup>3</sup> *Mémoires du Général Baron Dellard*, Paris, Librairie Illustrée, n.d. (see pp. 49, 50).

<sup>4</sup> Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 317. *Corr. Nap.* xxix. 220, says 12,000 men were well.

constituents of his new division: 'As for General Dumas, he remains with the division of General Masséna.' Wurmser, to show his gratitude, a few days later sent an A.D.C. with a letter warning Bonaparte of an attempt about to be made in the Romagna to poison him, with a description of the remedies. 'Cet avis fut utile,' says Napoleon.

On the 8th February Bonaparte told the Directory that he was sending Augereau to Paris with the colours taken at Mantua. No doubt the General was glad of a rest, and, as I have said, Marmont suggests that Bonaparte was also glad to let the Capital see what sort of men his lieutenants were. On the 18th February Bonaparte wrote to the Directory, 'General Augereau has started, Citizen-Directors, with sixty colours from Mantua. You will see in this brave General, to whom the Republic owes marked services, a citizen extremely zealous for the maintenance of our Government and our Constitution. I will not again recall to you all that he has done in this campaign: there has hardly been an affair at which he and his brave division have not contributed to the victory. I beg that, the moment his mission be fulfilled, and that he has profited by a moment at which the military operations are less active in Italy to finish some family affairs, you will send him back to the army with the least delay.' The reference in this letter to internal politics will be noted, for the opposition to the Directors was fast growing and Augereau was to have to deal with it later. The Directory received Augereau in the court of the Luxembourg, which was turned into their Hall of Sitzings for the occasion as there was an enormous attendance of people anxious to see such a General. 'Every one', said the *Moniteur* of the 2nd March 1797, 'was anxious to hear General Augereau. In seeing him, imagination retraced for each spectator the battles in which he had distinguished himself. By his side was his father, an old soldier, whose martial air seems yet, despite his grey hairs, to breathe the spirit of combat; and his brother, companion of his labours as his A.D.C.<sup>1</sup> Near him one also distinguished with lively interest a brother of the General-in-Chief Bonaparte, aged twelve;<sup>2</sup> each studied to recognize on his face the features of the conqueror of Italy.' The President of the Directory said: 'Oh Paris,

<sup>1</sup> Général Baron Jean-Pierre Augereau (1772-1836). *Fastes*, iv. 411.

<sup>2</sup> Jérôme.



cradle of the Revolution! what charms this spectacle must have for you, since you may be proud to have seen born within your walls one of the warriors who have gained most fame for the Republican arms, in the Pyrenees and in the Alps.' He then presented to the General a flag voted in memory of Arcola. In his address to the Directors (if it were his own work) Augereau spoke much in the style of the period, but hardly as violently as one might have expected. However, there could be no doubt as to his meaning when he burst out against alleged conspirators and the calumniators of the army. 'What, can they have persuaded themselves, these enemies of their country, these cowardly time-servers, who dare to flatter themselves that they will give us a master, that Republicans have fought for six years to have any other master than the Law?' This was a foretaste of what he was to do and say at Fructidor. In two years' time Brumaire was to teach the future Duc de Castiglione that both France and the army, thanks partly to Fructidor and other such lawless proceedings, were quite ready for a master other than the Law. Now, after the flags had been paraded before the admiring eyes of the Parisians, Augereau had time to look after the family affairs of which he had spoken to Bonaparte.

He soon sent his brother back to Italy, requesting, old trooper as he himself was, that Bonaparte would put him in a cavalry regiment to give him the proper bearing and appearance. His father, formerly a soldier, now a fruiterer in Paris, had already been the object of a demonstration. A few days before the news of the surrender of Mantua arrived in Paris, a fruiterer named Augereau, of the Rue Mouffetard, had presented a petition to the Directory, by which the clerks employed in the Directorial Offices learnt that he was the 'father of the immortal General of that name'. It was determined to honour the Army of Italy in the person of this respectable old man, aged seventy-five. A deputation was sent to invite him to a frugal and fraternal banquet. A chair was awaiting him at the top of the table, and a bouquet of laurel, ornamented with a tricolour ribbon, was presented to him in the name of the company. Couplets relating to the fête and inspired by enthusiasm were sung during the modest repast, the greater part of which consisted of gaiety. After the dinner a numerous company conducted the venerable old man back to his home. Knowing the

taste of the period for luxury, one is struck by the modesty of the repast; and one would like to read the petition which the father had presented: Augereau was rich enough to place his father above want.

In Paris Augereau swaggered as was to be expected from such a braggart. He told the Director Barras 'en confidence', before Serbelloni, that Bonaparte 'avait trahi' when he raised the siege of Mantua, when he, Augereau, had attacked and beaten the enemy. At Arcola he would have won had his division only been reinforced; that this was not done was due to the treachery of another General, Willot, commanding in the south of France. He spoke in the same vein to the Director Rewbell. The sceptical Barras had his doubts, for, 'It is the custom of Generals always to attribute to themselves what is brilliant in the army, and to allot the checks to others.' Wise Director! Augereau was already denouncing General Clarke, now in Italy with Bonaparte, as Clarke had reported on the plundering propensities of certain Generals, Augereau to wit. In private life Augereau was not content with winning Castiglione—it was he who had gained all the battles, conceived the plan of campaign, and repaired the mistakes of Bonaparte. Then he would twinkle his fingers, covered with diamonds of the highest value, not knowing that a third person, hidden for the purpose, was recording his words. Truly a 'fier brigand', as he was to be described by Carnot, quoting Rewbell, at Fructidor. Bonaparte knew in time of this, as the words were published by the agents of Louis XVIII, but he only laughed. Leaving Paris about the 8th April, Augereau reached Milan in the evening of the 20th. 'Never has any one', he wrote to Bonaparte, whom he had been abusing in the Capital, 'experienced so many difficulties and obstacles; however, the desire of again being with you has made me overcome everything.' He found himself in the midst of the revolt which had broken out at Verona and elsewhere in the rear of the army, which was now round Leoben, and, instead of joining his division at the front, he remained in rear, with ample opportunities for displaying his love of plunder.

## VII

### THE ADVANCE INTO AUSTRIA

(March to April 1797)

Reinforcements from the Rhine armies. Bernadotte. The crossing of the Tagliamento. Masséna's brilliance in the mountains. Leoben. Exploits of General Dumas.

#### CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

- 1797 13th April. Hoche denounces the armistice on the Rhine.  
18th–21st April. Rhine armies advance.  
21st April. Capture of the Klingin correspondence.  
22nd April. News of the Italian armistice ends the campaign on the Rhine.

THE campaign of March 1797, although it brought the *Armée d'Italie* within reach of Vienna and was, for the time, decisive of the struggle with Austria, is really of not much military interest, as its result was predetermined. The Austrians brought their best commander, the Archduke Charles, who had just hunted the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' under Moreau and the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' under Jourdan back over the Rhine, to confront Bonaparte; but whilst both sides were reinforcing their armies in Italy, the French did so the quicker, for the Austrian Government insisted on the Archduke, then in command on the Rhine, not detaching troops until Kehl (opposite Strasburg) and Huningue, were taken from the French, so as to deprive them of any hold on the right bank of the Rhine.<sup>1</sup> The result was that the Austrian reinforcements arrived too late, and the Archduke from the first was hopelessly overmatched. A fair observer, Colonel Graham, the future winner of Barossa, declared that it was certain Bonaparte must win. 'Having escaped destruction so narrowly at Rivoli, he has, by the wonderful exertions of his Government, been enabled to take the field with an immense army before we have received any reinforcements to make up for the severe losses in January. He will now have the credit of beating the Archduke everywhere, when in fact resistance was impossible. Some attempts to maintain posts in the mountains have failed and been attended with loss, as there is

<sup>1</sup> Phipps, ii. 393–5.



always a way to get round them with such numbers of active and enterprising men as the French army possesses.’<sup>1</sup> This is the stronger as Graham, who had accompanied Wurmser in the Castiglione campaign and Alvintzi in that of Rivoli, had in both cases been full of hope, and, as we have seen, had attributed the failures to the faults of the Austrians; in the Castiglione campaign he had complained that the French, though inferior in total strength, still always managed to have a superiority of numbers in any given part of the field.

The Austrian reinforcements, of from 30,000 to 40,000 men, did not start from the Rhine till the 6th February<sup>2</sup> and arrived too late to affect the campaign, especially as the Austrians meant to collect the mass of the army in the Friul, instead of the Tyrol, thus making a longer march for the fresh troops. On the other hand, in the first fortnight of February the columns from the ‘Rhin-et-Moselle’, under Delmas, and from the ‘Sambre-et-Meuse’, under Bernadotte, began to arrive at Verona, and by the 6th March Bernadotte’s division was collecting at Padua. He brought six infantry and two cavalry regiments, the infantry, if we take their strength in the campaign, being 10,349 men. Of this force one cavalry and five infantry regiments remained with him as his division in the campaign, Murat joining to lead his cavalry and advanced-guard. Two other infantry regiments from the ‘Sambre-et-Meuse’ had marched with the column under Delmas from the ‘Rhin-et-Moselle’, and so, adding their campaign strength, which was 2,487, the ‘Sambre-et-Meuse’ sent 12,836 men. The ‘Rhin-et-Moselle’ sent four infantry and two cavalry regiments, the strength of their infantry probably being about 6,000 men.<sup>3</sup> These regiments were dispersed among the divisions, as were the two regiments from the ‘Sambre-et-Meuse’ which had accompanied them. Some 10,000 men should have joined from the ‘Océan’, but as late as the 1st February 1797 Bonaparte would only acknowledge having received 3,400 men from that quarter. These, and indeed all, reinforcements were received with a certain ill-will and suspicion by the old troops of ‘Italie’, who were apt to believe that they might lose some of their—shall we say receipts, by having

<sup>1</sup> Graham from Klagenfurt, 28th March 1797. Delavoye, *Graham*, 153-4.

<sup>2</sup> Phipps, ii. 406.

<sup>3</sup> Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 140; I take the strength at 1,500 per regiment, see *Corr. Nap.* ii. 1544.

more sharers, and who also put their own glory far above that of other armies. When the 2nd Light, from the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', joined the division of Masséna at Tarvis in such a fine state that an officer of the 18th describes them as making the others look like so many guerrillas alongside them, Masséna, receiving their officers in his bivouac in the snow, told them that his division marched against the Austrians without counting them. 'Voilà comme on parlait à l'armée'; but the new-comers may have thought this boast rather implied a difference from themselves. No doubt the troops from both armies on the Rhine were more regularly trained and better turned out than those of 'Italie', who even now, in their days of prosperity, had little time for anything but the essentials. Bonaparte had much difficulty to get them even to look after their bayonets. We shall see that as soon as the armistice came disputes broke out between the old troops and the new-comers, but for the present the regiments under Bernadotte were kept apart in his division.

The troops of the two Rhine armies passed for being less hot-headed than those of 'Italie', but on reaching Lyons the regiments of Bernadotte insisted on receiving pay, and it was only after being paid that they resumed their march, the same insubordination being displayed by them at Milan. One would like to know details of these incidents, and whether they had anything to do with the fact that Bonaparte had ordered a gratification of fifteen days' pay to all the troops, the reinforcements as well as those of 'Italie', for it was only in the latter army that pay seems to have been issued with any regularity. Then, by the rules of 'Italie', troops on the march were lodged in churches or special buildings allotted for the purpose; but Bernadotte insisted on his men being billeted, that, perhaps, making it easier to feed them. Bonaparte being away on the expedition to Rome, the local commandants gave way to this breach of rules, except at Milan, where Colonel Dupuy of the 32nd, a hot-tempered man,<sup>1</sup> resisted, and, probably losing his temper, was put in arrest by Bernadotte; but, to the surprise of Bernadotte, Bonaparte decided in favour of Dupuy.

For us the joining of Bernadotte is an event: he was the

<sup>1</sup> 'Homme de guerre, ardent autant que vigoureux, fort redoutable en combats singuliers . . . il passait pour un assez mauvais homme', Thiébault, ii. 35, 127; Roguet, i. 157-8.

only one of those with whom we are concerned who came as a distinct personality, the representative of another army, which had had a separate career, foreign to that of 'Italie', and whose history, until its late reverses—due to Moreau—had been one of almost unbroken success.<sup>1</sup> A former private of the old army, like Masséna and Augereau, Bernadotte was some nine months junior to them as General of Division. He came, apparently willingly, selected and praised by Kléber, then in command of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', and in spite of the fact that Bonaparte had asked that no Generals of Division should be sent to him, as the work in Italy was so different, unless they were distinguished officers. The Directory, in notifying him that Bernadotte's appointment was permanent, said that he had already merited their satisfaction, and they hoped that Bonaparte would give them a favourable account of his services. There was no doubt that he was a thoroughly proved soldier, and he stood too high for his division to be broken up or for him to be given any but the command of part of the active army; and, irrespective of that fact, time was saved by not waiting till his regiments could be spread over the army, when every moment was of importance in order to forestall the Archduke Charles. In all this we can be certain of our facts: it is another matter when we wish to learn with what ideas Bernadotte himself came, and in the reflections given by Roguet as occurring to some persons it is hard to know how much is due to after events. Did Bernadotte come already ambitious, having little sympathy for Bonaparte, and exaggerating his own Republicanism and love of popularity? It is curious that we find him after the campaign taking the trouble to go over the whole situation of France in a private conversation with the young Thiébault, 'in which he passed in review all that affected the situation of France, calculating what might still menace her in her political existence and in her internal welfare; he was moved even to tears. This moment, in which he showed himself so pure in his intentions, so elevated in his devotion, so different from many other leaders—with whom one would not have had to account for anything except their military glory, their ambitions, their fortunes—excited in me an admiration which I ought to acknowledge, notwithstanding later events

<sup>1</sup> Phipps, ii. 355, 356; 401, 402.



which might seem not to justify it.<sup>1</sup> All this might be admirable, but what was a senior General of Division doing in showing to the A.D.C. of the Chief of the Staff to Masséna that he was not as other men? No doubt he was always courteous to officers sent to him, making an agreeable contrast to many other Generals, and it is characteristic of him that he should express his wish to have Thiébault for A.D.C., as, also, is his regret that there was no place vacant. Of course his position, with that of his division, driven like a wedge into the solid body of the Armée d'Italie, was bound to expose him and it to rivalry, if not to hostility, on the part of the older components of that army. On the whole it seems better to assume that Bernadotte came simply as a General passing to another theatre of war. There had been nothing in his past, or in that of the armies with which he had served, to lead his thoughts to politics. Lafayette and then Dumouriez had been swept away as so much dust the moment they had attempted to use their troops as factors in internal affairs; and in the last campaigns on the Rhine or in Germany the armies there had done nothing to give them grounds for making any claim affecting the government of their country. The two chiefs of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', Jourdan and Kléber, thought much of the foe in front, little of the politicians in their rear. It was for a lesson in war, not to enter into a revolution, that Bernadotte came.

For this final campaign the army was formed in eight divisions. Of these, Joubert, on the upper Adige round Trent, commanded the 5th, his own division, as well as the 6th, Rey, and the 7th, Dallemagne, altogether some 14,125 men. He was to act separately, but for the present was only to hold his position on the Lavis. The main body, under Bonaparte himself, was composed of four divisions. The 1st division, at Bassano under Masséna, in which Brune led a brigade, was 9,725 strong. The 18th Regiment, in which Lieut.-Colonel Suchet had a battalion, still belonged to this division. The 2nd division, at Treviso, under Guieu as Augereau was still in France, was 10,215 strong. Sérurier's, the 3rd division, was 6,543 strong, and Bernadotte's, the 4th division, in which, as we have seen, General Murat led the advanced-guard and the cavalry, was 6,800 strong. This main body, consisting of some 33,283 men, was to strike the

<sup>1</sup> Thiébault ii. 108-9

first blows, but Masséna's division was to begin by working on the left flank, partly, in the first days, in touch with the right of Joubert in the Sugana valley. Victor's division, of 6,466 men, was in the south at Foligno, and, as we have seen, it was not till the 20th March that he was even ordered to begin sending his men northwards. Still, altogether we may take the army as numbering rather less than Napoleon himself put it later, say about 58,000 men,<sup>1</sup> not including the 8,706 in the territorial divisions: Lombardy, on the Adige, Mantua, Tortona, Cuneo, Nice, and Leghorn. Altogether Bonaparte had, say, 66,000 men. The strength of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' in this campaign was about 60,000, and that of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', under Hoche, about 70,000 men. Some small affairs preceded the beginning of the campaign. On the 23rd February Murat captured the entrenchments of the Austrians at Foy, taking 25 prisoners and killing 20 men, and then, falling on some Tyrolese Chasseurs, he killed about 60 more. Later he attacked the advanced posts and took 100 men. Masséna, wishing to throw back the post of the enemy on the right of the Piave, sent over Kellermann  *fils* , then Adjutant-General, at San Mamma, when Kellermann, unable to manage his horse, had to remain in rear whilst his assistant, Lasalle, got 'compromis d'une manière diabolique', as Kellermann put it to Thiébault, who, coming up with a half squadron of Dragoons, brought off the party. After this Kellermann left the division of Masséna to join the reserve cavalry. The official account makes Kellermann put the enemy to flight, killing two men and wounding another, whilst Thiébault, who was there, makes it evident that the party was lucky to get off and was followed by the enemy to the river.

The Archduke had collected some 40,000 men, of whom 4,200 were cavalry, with 157 guns; this includes 5,000 of the late garrison of Mantua, who had been exchanged as soon as they reached Gorizia; but he hoped for large reinforcements, and especially for the troops with which he had been besieging Kehl. These would have made his numbers equal, or even superior, to those of his antagonist; but Bonaparte, fully realizing the situation, pushed on his advance, and all that the

<sup>1</sup> I follow Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 531-2, but there is some error, probably only one of type, in his total, which should be 57,874 according to his items, not 58,474; probably his total is correct and an item wrong.

Archduke could do was to try to gain time for his troops from the Rhine to get up. On the 10th March Bonaparte began his advance, and on the 16th he crossed the Tagliamento, with the division of Bernadotte on the right and that of Guieu on the left, Dugua's cavalry and the division of Sérurier being in reserve. Some importance was attached to this so-called battle in the army, mainly, I think, because it was a sort of display new to the troops of 'Italie', whose divisions were seldom, if ever, engaged except singly. The river was broad but shallow: Desaix drove across it next year, the water only coming up to the hocks of his horses. The Austrians were off their guard, as the French, having marched all night, took post and then began to make soup, so that the Archduke drew off his men, when Bonaparte suddenly advanced. Each regiment had its second battalion deployed in line and the two others in close column, the light cavalry of the divisions being on their outward flanks. The advanced-guard of each division was formed of a regiment of Light Infantry, deployed, with a battalion of grenadiers on either flank. This formation was approved by the French as giving them a good front of fire and protection from cavalry. Bernadotte told his men to remember that they came from the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' and that the Armée d'Italie watched them, and the whole army, if I may use the term, swaggered across, much admiring itself. The enemy were taken by surprise, and when their cavalry threatened the right of Bernadotte, the cavalry of Dugua, under whom the younger Kellermann served, drove them off, and the Austrians retired with the loss of six guns and 500 men. There had been but little fighting, and the whole affair really was a grand spectacle, in which the veteran troops of 'Italie' chose to believe that they could perform field-manœuvres on a large scale as well as could the new arrivals from the Rhine armies. Kellermann  *fils*  was specially noticed by Bonaparte after this affair. 'Adjutant-General Kellermann', he wrote to the Directory, 'has received several sabre cuts while charging at the head of the cavalry with his usual courage.' On the 21st of March Bonaparte sent him to Paris with twenty-four colours, twelve just taken from the Austrians and twelve taken from the troops of the Pope by Victor's division in the south. He mentioned again Kellermann's having been honourably wounded, and said: 'He has



conducted himself with the same distinction in all the other affairs of the past campaign.' Reaching Paris, and received by the Directors with their usual ceremony, Kellermann  *fils*  addressed them in a speech rather remarkable for the warmth with which he mentioned Bonaparte, who was termed: 'The illustrious general, the young conqueror'; while the army might expect everything from 'the skill of the hero who commands us', terms not used by those who had preceded him. Had he only kept the same tone after Marengo, it would have been well for him. The Directors in their turn spoke of the 'son of a sagacious warrior, celebrated in the triumphs of the Republic' and said they received the colours with the more feeling as 'they are stained by your generous blood, shed for your country'; and on the 28th May 1797 he was promoted General of Brigade. Obviously in selecting him Bonaparte had had an eye to his father, the old Kellermann, still at the head of the Armée des Alpes, which was a mere depot for the Armée d'Italie. The younger Kellermann had already had the honour of receiving one of the letters of praise addressed to a few officers of the army by the Directors, saying they had remarked his conduct, which justified the hopes they had conceived of the son of General Kellermann, and trusting that his wounds received in the battle would not keep him long from the field of Republican glory.

Still leading the way eastwards, Bernadotte occupied Palma on the 18th March, Sérurier coming up on his right and Guieu on his left; and then on the 19th he went on for Gradisca, on the Isonzo, which was held by a garrison of the enemy. Anxious to show what his men could do, Bernadotte ordered the assault, Murat being sent with an infantry regiment and some cavalry to cross the Isonzo and to cut the retreat of the enemy; but the fire of the place was too heavy and the division was beaten off, until in the evening Sérurier, sent round to the south or right by Bonaparte, appeared on the heights on the east and north of the town, when the garrison surrendered to Bernadotte, who took four battalions, eight colours, and seven guns.<sup>1</sup> In his report Bernadotte spoke of 'the audacious bravery of General Murat, Adjutant-General Mireur and General Friant' (the latter to be one of the divisional Generals of Davout).<sup>2</sup> Murat, with some

<sup>1</sup> For terms of capitulation see *Campagne du Général Buonaparte*, 326-8.

<sup>2</sup> He had fought in the 'Sambre-et-Meuse under Jourdan. Phipps, ii. 180.

Light Infantry, had crossed the Isonzo through water up to their shoulders. Bonaparte in his report to the Directors mentioned Bernadotte's recommendation of Murat and others, and said: 'The division of General Bernadotte has conducted itself with a courage which is a guarantee to us of successes to come. General Bernadotte, his A.D.C.s, and his Generals, have braved every danger.' The assault had been delivered on the strength of the report of Colonel Lahure, who had been sent on to summon the Governor, and who considered the place was but a 'bicoque' and that the garrison were panic-stricken. No doubt irritated by the failure of the attack, Bernadotte joined Lahure, who having no ladders, was trying to burn the gate or cut it down, and he remained there for three hours, exposed to a murderous fire but spurring on his men. Bernadotte continued to move eastward, on Laibach, but we must leave him for the moment, to deal with the rest of the main body, who now advanced northward, Guieu and Sérurier being flanked, or almost preceded, by Masséna to the west. The Archduke, having had part of his force thrown back by Bonaparte into the Isonzo valley, was trying to concentrate at Villach, where his first reinforcements from the Rhine were arriving. Bayalitsch with the right of the Friul corps was moving up the Isonzo, and the left, separated from it by Bonaparte's march, was to circle round to the east by Laibach. Bonaparte, however, cut off Bayalitsch. Whilst Bernadotte and Sérurier, after the Tagliamento crossing, had been marching east, Guieu, with the former division of Augereau, had been sent north-east through Udine and Cividale to Caporetto in the Isonzo valley, much higher up than Gorizia, and thence he followed Bayalitsch; whilst in his rear now came Bonaparte with the division of Sérurier, which from the 21st March was led by Chabot, as Sérurier had again fallen ill: so that two divisions were now led by temporary commanders. It will be remembered that on the 20th March Bonaparte from Palma had ordered Victor to begin sending his troops on Triest from Foligno, and Dugua's cavalry reserve was also sent there from the army.

The real interest of the campaign turns on Masséna, whose division played the most important and dangerous part. Brune led his rear-guard, Suchet had a battalion of the 18th Regiment, and the lively Thiébault was assistant to the Chief of the Staff,

the plundering Solignac. When the rest of the main body had moved eastwards, Masséna struck north from Bassano, going up the Piave by Feltre and Belluno, places which General Clarke, now only a diplomatic agent, and Victor, far in the south, would have been astonished to know were to give names to their duchies. Farther north, at Fortogna, the enemy under Lusignan, the commander of the encircling column at Rivoli, stood on the 13th March in a position which looked impregnable, their right on a mountain and their left on the river; but Masséna, riding in advance with his staff, found that the Piave was fordable, and the attack became easy.<sup>1</sup> Whilst the Light Infantry spread along the front, firing, and the 18th Regiment formed the head of the column for assault, the Dragoons, fording the stream, overthrew the enemy's Hussars and took the infantry in rear of their left flank, so that the Austrians were routed. Most of them got away, but Lusignan, fighting bravely in a square in the gorge of Longarone, had to surrender with 660 men. He had been taken before, at Rivoli, and had been exchanged. For the moment he had to follow Masséna, but he wrote asking that Bonaparte would, according to his courteous custom, allow him to return home, where his private affairs called him, on his *parole*. The French, however, considered that he had insulted their wounded when he had captured Brescia in the Castiglione campaign (Murat being one of the prisoners), and Bonaparte ordered him to be sent under escort to France, for the Directory to decide on his fate.

The immediate object of this detachment of Masséna northwards, the destruction of Lusignan's corps, being thus completed, Bonaparte ordered him to rejoin the main body, intending to have 'la brave division Masséna' at the crossing of the Tagliamento, where he vainly hoped to have a battle which would decide the fate of the campaign. Time was important, and the country intervening between the valley of the Piave and that of the Tagliamento was most difficult. Turning back southwards, Masséna scrambled his way over the mountains by Serravalle to Sacile. The path was so difficult that Lusignan, who was still with the column and must have known the country well, asked Thiébault to tell Masséna that he knew the mountain: infantry would get over, with trouble, cavalry with

<sup>1</sup> I follow for this affair Thiébault, ii. 78-9.



much fatigue and loss, but, as for the artillery, it was impossible for a gun, still less a wagon, to be taken over. Masséna, receiving the message, was not in the least impressed. 'Go and tell General Lusignan from me', he replied, 'that after having shown him the day before yesterday how to attack a village, to-day I will teach him how to cross a mountain.' He was as good as his word. When Lusignan saw how the gunners worked at their pieces, smoothed the road, carried out repairs, and changed their broken wheels, whilst the grenadiers and sappers aided them in carrying, when necessary, the guns and wagons, and this over six leagues till the summit was reached: 'With such troops, sir,' he told Thiébault, 'and with such leaders as you have, there is nothing which you cannot do.'<sup>1</sup> This proves how right Graham was when a few days later he spoke of the French in almost identical terms, which I have already quoted.<sup>2</sup> Masséna, reaching Sacile on the 16th March, was on the same road as that by which Bonaparte and the main body had advanced to the Tagliamento; but, hard as his men had worked, the division was in rear and was too late to act with the rest that day, and Bonaparte ordered him to move to the north-east for Spilimbergo, where, on the 18th March, as if in emulation of the main body, it crossed the Tagliamento in line, to the sound of its bands, the infantry up to their armpits and the cavalry to the croups of their horses in the water. All this movement of Masséna, first away from and then back towards the main body, puzzles Clausewitz, who had not got the exact dates and who does not understand that the object of the detachment was to crush Lusignan, who otherwise would have been left free to act on the rear of the main body.<sup>3</sup> So important did Bonaparte consider this that one division of Joubert's force, that of Baraguey d'Hilliers, was put under Masséna's orders to act on his left flank in the Sugana valley; and the divisions of both Sérurier and Guieu, after passing the Piave, had been ordered to be ready to throw back Lusignan from the Tagliamento valley if he sought refuge there. Baraguey d'Hilliers, however, was too late in his movements, and the action of the other divisions was not

<sup>1</sup> Thiébault, ii. 79-81; Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 337. I suppose Masséna moved by Capodiponte, along the Lago di San Croce, to Seravalle. See Mayr's map, *Lande Tyrol*, München, 1888.

<sup>2</sup> At the beginning of this chapter.

<sup>3</sup> Clausewitz (1797), 304-7. He had not Napoleon's correspondence.

required as Lusignan was driven off without them. Bonaparte certainly seems to have intended Masséna to go farther north if necessary for his object. He told the Directory, a little later,<sup>1</sup> that the reputation of the Archduke had at first imposed on him to a certain extent, so that he attributed to that Prince plans he really had not formed, and this may have been one of the occasions.

Masséna was again detached northwards whilst the main body moved east on Gorizia, and he was told to take San Daniele, Osopo, and Gemona; that is, he was sent up the left bank of the Tagliamento until that river bent westwards, when, himself still going north, he was to reconnoitre Moggio and to try to take the Chiusa-Veneta in the Fella valley. As Bonaparte at this moment, the 17th March, was only just over the Tagliamento and was about to move eastwards on Palma, this was to place Masséna in a most responsible and somewhat dangerous position. Indeed, a later order of the 19th March from Palma, telling him to reconnoitre as far north as Tarvis, intensified this, as Bonaparte must have known that the reinforcements for the Archduke from the Rhine were coming up there. It is true that Guieu, going up the Isonzo, was soon told to join him, but that junction must have been much in the clouds, for a column of the enemy was between the two divisions, and meanwhile Masséna was exposed to all the forces which the Archduke could collect to the north of him. Luckily the Masséna of 1797, leading his column and swift to take advantage of the moment, was a very different man from the worn Marshal who followed his army to Busaco. We have seen him reconnoitring in advance at Fortogna, and now, marching up the left bank of the Tagliamento, he headed his troops, with his staff and twenty-five Chasseurs. Coming on Fort Osopo, he found the enemy busy evacuating the stores, when at once he charged the party of fifty men covering the work, drove them off, and seized the stores, some already in wagons, with the fort itself. Passing Gemona and leaving the Tagliamento, he came through Moggio on the Chiusa-Veneta, or Chiusa-Forte, at the entrance of the Fella valley or ravine. Here, as so often, the enemy's position seemed almost impregnable, but just as the garrison believed they were beating off the assault, a hail of rocks from above told

<sup>1</sup> *Corr. Nap.* ii, No. 1632, 25th March 1797.

them that they were turned, and the place soon fell. Then, pressing on ever northward, the troops of Ocskay were driven through Pontebba, when Ocskay not merely withdrew along the road eastward for Tarvis but even through that place to Wurzen in the Save valley, uncovering by this movement the very road along which the Austrian column under Bayalitsch was retreating up the Isonzo valley, with the cavalry, artillery, and all the trains of the Austrians, in front of the forces of Guieu and Sérurier, under Bonaparte. This was the stranger as Ocskay's troops had fought well, offering a resistance to which the French were unaccustomed, and Masséna, not losing a minute to concentrate, had attacked when only about half his division had come up. This was on the 21st March, and Bayalitsch, according to Clausewitz, should have reached Tarvis that day, when he ought to have been able to cut his way on to safety.

The peculiar position now occupied by Masséna can be understood even without a map. If we take the Fella valley, up which he had marched rapidly, and the Isonzo valley, up which Bayalitsch was struggling with his trains, as, roughly speaking, parallel, he had moved from the head of the one eastwards to the head of the other; and now, cutting off Bayalitsch, he stood, master of the situation—always supposing that he himself were not crushed, as Vandamme was to be at Kulm. Thiébault assumes that the Archduke understood the situation and intended to concentrate at Tarvis, before Masséna could reach it, the troops of Ocskay, those of Bayalitsch from the south, and the divisions from the Rhine. This force, having crushed Masséna, would then fall on Guieu (isolated from the division of Chabot, late Sérurier), and so beat Bonaparte's army in detail. No doubt the Archduke still hoped to be able to concentrate in time to take the offensive, but he does not seem to have anticipated the march of Masséna: otherwise we may assume that he would have left his Laibach column and would have been at Tarvis before Masséna, whereas he was only at Krainburg<sup>1</sup> when he heard that Tarvis was lost. Bayalitsch also could not have known of the rapid march of Masséna, otherwise surely he would have hurried on part of his column to reinforce Ocskay, although he may have assumed, as perhaps Ocskay himself did, that the troops holding Tarvis were sufficient.<sup>2</sup> Why did Bonaparte

<sup>1</sup> North-west of Laibach, on the Save.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Gachot, 260.



adventure Masséna's division? To recapitulate briefly the course of events: on the 21st March, from Gorizia, he had ordered that General to march on Pontebba and thence on Tarvis, to join Guieu who ought to have his advanced posts, he said, at Tarvis on the 23rd or at latest on the 24th. Guieu actually got within striking distance of Tarvis on the 22nd, but between him and Masséna was a column of the enemy. I do not think that the strength of this column is given anywhere, but when it was captured the French took from 4,000 to 5,000 prisoners.<sup>1</sup> This does not include Gontreuil's brigade, which broke through, and which we must put at least at 2,000, for it overpowered the advanced-guard of Masséna, as we shall see; nor does it include the many men who must have escaped, or been killed. Originally the column must have been very nearly as strong as the division of Masséna, perhaps stronger, otherwise the Archduke would hardly have risked it by itself. Now on the 24th March Bonaparte at Gorizia, knowing that Masséna was at Tarvis, estimated the column at 2,000 men only, and naturally hoped it would fall into the hands of that General. Of course he would assume that Masséna could draw back if threatened by two arms of the enemy's pincers, but then the Archduke would have been in a good position, placed between Masséna's division and that of Guieu. There was no support close behind Guieu, for while on the 22nd March he was to be at Caporetto, Chabot, apparently that day at Gorizia, was next morning to move eastwards by Chernitza on the Laibach road.

Fortunately Masséna, wary but swift to strike, was the very man for the situation. After taking Tarvis he had followed Ocskay for a mile and a half beyond the village to the east on the Wurzen road, or perhaps to the forking of the Villach road and that down the Save; then apparently he had fallen back to the west of the village. On the morning of the 22nd March he learnt that his troops occupying Târvis had been driven out by a force from Predit and the south: this was Gontreuil's brigade, heading the column of Bayalitsch, which took up a strong position at Saifnitz, a little west of Tarvis. Behind it came 1,700 men of

<sup>1</sup> Thiébault, ii. 88, who was there on the staff, says Masséna took 4,540 men. *Corr. Nap.* ii, No. 1632 and xxix. 239, say 5,000. Koch, *Masséna*, ii. 349, says the Austrians lost in their combats with Masséna 2,500 men, whilst Guieu took 500. Gachot, 266, professing to quote from the report of Masséna, says Bayalitsch surrendered 1,540 men and Koblos 500. Of course many of the Austrians took to the hills.

Bayalitsch's. At the same time Ocskay, ordered by the Archduke to retake Tarvis, came back from Wurzen on the east, and the Archduke himself arrived on the field. Masséna at once attacked with one cavalry and three infantry regiments. Brune led on the 75th, but a bridge he had to assault was swept by the enemy's artillery, and the frozen ground prevented the cavalry acting. General Motte now took the lead with the 18th, and the 2nd Light supported. The Archduke, realizing the importance of the day, launched the squadron which formed his own escort and exposed himself to great danger in his efforts to hold his ground, but he was driven back, and Masséna once more held Tarvis and the head of the valley up which the main body of Bayalitsch was coming. Checked in front by Masséna, attacked in rear by Guieu, caught in a narrow gorge, Bayalitsch and his men laid down their arms, and the French got 25 guns, the trains of the Austrians, and, as I have said, probably some 4,000 prisoners. Pelleport, in an annoying way, tells us that: 'The Lieut.-Colonel of the 18th, commanding the skirmishers of the division, Captain Pineaud, &c., received praise: it was well deserved'; but he does not say whether this was Suchet or not, who anyway was wounded here.<sup>1</sup> Masséna now advanced again, first northwards on Villach, then eastwards on Klagenfurt, thence north-east to Judenburg, and down the valley of the Mur to Leoben, on the road to Vienna; he was followed by the divisions of Guieu (late Augereau) and Chabot (late Sérurier). In several more combats he drove back the Austrians when they tried to stand: Klagenfurt was won by a charge of cavalry, thrown by Masséna on the enemy's centre, and on the 31st March he reached Saint Veit. On the 2nd April he found the Austrians strongly posted in the gorges of Dirnstein, in front of Neumarkt, when, forming the 18th and 32nd in close column, he placed himself at their head and threw the enemy back, occupying Neumarkt next day. The Austrians fought well, trying to cover the road to the Capital, and affair after affair took place, Brune leading the advanced-guard of the division, which alone did the fighting. The 2nd Light, a new arrival from the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'<sup>2</sup> (nick-named by the old regiments of 'Italie' 'the contingent', in memory of the troops formerly supplied by

<sup>1</sup> *Fastes*, iii. 564; but not in Gavard.

<sup>2</sup> It had come with Bernadotte and had been detached from his division.

the minor German Princes), distinguished itself, Thiébault describing it near Neumarkt as 'toujours plus terrible'.

The last moments of the campaign show how alert and vigilant Masséna was. On the 7th April as he approached Saint Michael he received the news that an armistice had been concluded by Bonaparte at Judenburg in rear on that day. As he had been ordered to occupy Leoben,<sup>1</sup> he sent a flag of truce on to warn the Austrians that he would advance, and when they asked for an hour's time he replied: 'Not five minutes', and moved on. Then came a pathetic incident. Out of one of the first houses of Saint Michael came an old Austrian General, napkin in hand, saying, 'Monsieur le général, it is a week since I have dined: cannot you halt your troops and let me take my meal?' 'You are quite at liberty', said Masséna, laughing, 'to take your dinner, and to rest as long as you like, but I have no power to go slower or to suspend my movement. So get the road cleared, or I attack.' The road was left free, and Masséna, advancing to Leoben through the Austrian division, left a regiment to watch it, until, dinner finished, the General and his men withdrew. In all these combats at the end of the campaign and of the war, and especially at that of Tarvis, fought 'on a plateau of ice, above the clouds,' success had been due to the intuitive insight and skilful daring of Masséna. He could not have had any real idea of the forces he was to meet at Tarvis, and any delay on his part, any failure of his admirable troops, would have brought overpowering numbers on him and might have led to the defeat of the whole army. His rapid strokes, and his close following up of the enemy, had been fatal to all the plans of the Archduke for concentrating his troops, and had obliged him to fight with inferior strength. It is certain that, as Thiébault said, 'Such a continued series of successes could only have been possible with troops *d'élite*, led by a chief *d'élite*.' The regiments of Masséna seemed really to be part of himself. 'No words can describe the electric influence, the almost supernatural power, he exercised over them by the suddenness of his resolutions, as definite as they were instantaneous, and by the overpowering rapidity with which he commanded their execution. From the highest officer to the lowest soldier, there was

<sup>1</sup> Thiébault, ii. 93, says Brück, but that order was only given next day (see *Corr. Nap.* ii, Nos. 1701, 1707), to be carried out on the 9th April.



not one of us who did not pride himself on belonging to the division of Masséna, and without this pride in its role how could the division have accomplished so many miracles? He was everywhere, ordering the least movement in person, and most often leaving nothing to be done even by his Generals of Brigade.' The Marshal's *baton* was now fairly won, although seven years had to pass before it came into his worn hands.

During the negotiations which followed the armistice, Masséna was placed at Brück and Guieu at Leoben, while Chabot went south of Brück, down the Mur to Gratz. Here on the 20th April Sérurier, recovered from his illness, rejoined and again took command. Bernadotte, it will be remembered, had been sent from the Tagliamento eastwards on Laibach, with orders from Bonaparte, if the Archduke, slipping past the main body, marched on him, to retire westwards to the Isonzo and then up the river, to hold the gorge of the Chiusa-Veneta. He occupied Laibach apparently about the 31st March, having on the way taken the mines of Idria and much treasure, with which we, fortunately, have nothing to do. Then at last on the 3rd April, Bonaparte, then at Friesach,<sup>1</sup> ordered him to start next day to reach Klagenfurt in two marches and then to follow the main body; Dugua with his cavalry was also called up from Trieste, which was to be occupied by Victor's division from the south. However, after the conclusion of the armistice, Bernadotte was halted at Neumarkt. He had had but little fighting after Gradisca, and that only on the advance to Laibach.

This accounts for the whole army except Joubert, who had been left on the upper Adige by Trent to keep back the Austrians in the Tyrol, with his own strong division and two weak ones, that of Rey, succeeded by Delmas, and that of Dallemagne, succeeded first by Baraguey d'Hilliers and then by Dumas. On the 15th March Bonaparte had placed Joubert in command of Lombardy and the surrounding districts, so that, like Bernadotte, he could deal with the situation if the enemy should outflank the main body and push ahead a column on the Brenta. On the 17th March, having received orders to pass the Lavis, Joubert advanced, and after severe fighting he divided the enemy on his front, Kerpen retiring to the north-east by Klausen to Brixen, and then to Sterzing to remake the junction with Loudon, who

<sup>1</sup> South of Neumarkt.

drew back from Botzen north-west on Meran. Joubert reached Brixen on the 23rd March and remained there some days. He now was fiercely attacked by the Austrians, supported by the armed peasantry; and considering the resistance the Tyrolese offered in 1805 and in 1809, it is wonderful how well the French at this time held their own, but the position became dangerous. The A.D.C. Lavalette, sent by Bonaparte up the Drave to communicate with Joubert, failed to get farther than Lienz, but it is said that an officer sent up from Trent was more fortunate: I shall deal with this question in a moment. However, either with, or, as I believe, without orders, Joubert determined to join the main body, of whose progress he had obtained some information. Drawing up his rear division from Botzen to Brixen, on the 5th April he started, with his divisions echeloned at a day's march, and, going up the Eisach and cutting the bridges, he got to Lienz, in the Drave valley, by the 8th April, and to Spital on the 10th. There he came in touch with the main body and learnt of the conclusion of the armistice.

Joubert had been so completely cut off from all communication with the rest of the army, and even with Italy, that in Paris he and his troops had been supposed to be lost, a belief which he and Bonaparte thought caused rejoicings amongst some of the parties in the Capital. His cutting his way out to the army was taken as a triumph; and although Bonaparte took the march as done by his orders, it is evident that Joubert started on his own initiative, before receiving instructions, being doubtless forced to get out of his position amidst a swarm of peasants who clung round him like so many wasps. His march had been dangerous enough: 'For twenty-four hours', he told his father, 'I saw myself under the murderous steel of the Tyrolese, risen *en masse*; and I kept them off during a march of twenty leagues through the most terrible country.' Lavalette, writing in later years, believed he had been sent to him with orders to join the main body, and that though he failed, still the message had been got through from Trent. This certainly is a mistake, for he was sent on the 30th March, and on the 3rd April Bonaparte wrote from Friesach, alluding to the double message by Lavalette and from Trent, but only saying he might possibly give orders for Joubert to join him; and the first order to join was sent from Judenburg on the 8th April, when Joubert was drawing near Spital. Also

Joubert brought all his force, whilst the orders sent to him directed him to leave two of his divisions in the Tyrol and only to bring his own.<sup>1</sup> Bonaparte had intended that General Dumas, with his own division and that of Delmas, should remain at Brixen to cover Italy and the Adige valley, holding his ground as long as he could, and, if the enemy advanced in superior force, retiring down the Adige, retarding the movement by clinging to each position in succession, and informing Kilmaine, who had been left in command of the district round Mantua. Bonaparte, however, had not understood the situation or the effect of the rising of the peasantry, a foretaste of what was to happen in Spain; and had Joubert divided his force, both parts might have been overwhelmed. Anyway, Bonaparte did not blame the action of his lieutenant, but tried to cover Italy by ordering Kilmaine to send Victor's division to Castelnovo,<sup>2</sup> to block the mouth of the Adige valley. Victor was to have left Treviso, and, crossing the Adige at Legnago, then to have moved north, but he delayed at Treviso. This action of Joubert's in uncovering Lombardy has its importance as it brought the Austrians close to Verona in April, as we shall see farther on.

The account of Joubert's expedition would be incomplete without telling the exploits of General Alexandre Dumas, who had started in command of the cavalry of the corps, as we may call the three divisions; but on the 3rd April General Baraguey d'Hilliers, who commanded one of the small divisions with Joubert, having been made General of Division and being intended to replace Sérurier, Bonaparte nominated Dumas to succeed him at the head of the Tyrol division, and, 'wishing to give that General a mark of satisfaction,' he left him also in command of the cavalry. When Joubert was called in, Dumas was to have remained at Brixen, as we have seen, with the two small divisions, according to Bonaparte's plan. This plan, indeed, was not carried out, but it shows considerable trust in the man whom Thiébault, allowing that he might be called the first soldier in the world, still says was not made to be a General. As for the deeds of Dumas, only one pen, that of his son, could recount them properly, and even he has produced but a feeble copy in the *Three Musketeers*. Which of them was ever mentioned by

<sup>1</sup> Lavalette, i, pt. ii, 16-20; *Corr. Nap.* xxix. 248; No. 1681; No. 1706.

<sup>2</sup> A little east of Peschiera.



the Commander-in-Chief of an army for having, alone, kept a bridge against a whole squadron of the enemy until his men could get up?<sup>1</sup> It is said that in a riding-school Dumas would seize a beam overhead with his arms, and then, grasping his horse with his legs, he could raise the animal from the ground. Incredibly strong, marvellously brave, miraculously fortunate, how he managed to live through the dangers into which his exploits brought him cannot be understood. All that we can say is that the army believed in his deeds, which we read with amazement!

It will be seen that, of the group with which we are concerned, two Generals of Division, Augereau in Paris and Victor near Rome, took no part in this campaign, whilst another, Sérurier, left his command, on account of illness originally contracted under Mantua, almost on the first hostilities. Of General Lannes we hear nothing: probably he served with head-quarters. Another General, Murat, had led the cavalry of Bernadotte with distinction. Lieut.-Colonel Suchet, still under Masséna, probably had distinguished himself at Tarvis, but he received no reward now. The staff must have had a busy time; Lavalette had failed honourably, after much danger, to reach Joubert up the Drave from Lienz, alone; and Marmont, sent later with a proper force (a cavalry regiment and some infantry), got the first news of Joubert's approach. Another A.D.C., Duroc, was reported to the Directors as having at the passage of the Isonzo 'conducted himself with the bravery which characterizes the staff of the Armée d'Italie'. Neither Berthier nor Bessières is mentioned, but they, like Junot, must have always been with Bonaparte. One curious reward had been given by the Commander-in-Chief. A woman of the 51st Regiment had swum out into the Piave and saved a drowning soldier: 'I have made her a present of a golden necklace, to which will be hung a civic crown with the name of the soldier whom she rescued.' We must suppose she was one of the 'lavandières', or others permitted to accompany the army, orders having been given that all unauthorized women were to be arrested, daubed over with black, and so exposed in some public place, as these 'abominable persons' were said to induce men to pillage.

<sup>1</sup> *Corr. Nap.* ii. 441; D'Hauterive, *Dumas*, 138-44; Maurel, *Les Trois Dumas*, Paris, Librairie Illustrée, n.d., pp. 16-26.

Bonaparte had begun the policy of giving not only honourable distinctions—‘sabres d’honneur’, but of adding more substantial rewards. About the 6th March 1797 he ordered that all who had swords of honour should have a pension of 100 francs on the Mantuans, and he gave ‘gratifications’ to a number of persons, amongst whom General Joubert got 20,000 livres, Bessières and Dumas each 10,000, Hercule—the leader of the party of Guides sent round at Arcola—, 5,000, his men 20,000 amongst them, and two soldiers who had been of service to Bonaparte at Arcola, 250 livres each. Of course he had not the slightest right to give swords, still less to have phrases inscribed on the colours of regiments, as he took to doing; but he was the paymaster of the Directory, and who could say him nay? The Directory, besides giving promotions, could only thank on paper, and they sent congratulatory letters to Berthier, Bernadotte, Masséna, Guieu, Mireur, Adjutant-General Kellermann, Colonels Andréossi and Miquet, and the leader of the 10th Chasseurs. To Berthier they spoke of the services he had rendered, especially at Rivoli: ‘We are glad, Citizen-General, to retrace all these glorious events in which you have happily seconded the General-in-Chief Bonaparte, and we consider that we must felicitate you in advance on the part you will have in the further success of the brave army in which the office of Chief of the Staff is confided to you.’ It was understood by now that Berthier was not the real leader of the army. Bernadotte was told that the brave divisions of the Rhine had marked their junction with the Armée d’Italie by success, and their chiefs had shown themselves worthy to associate the laurels won on the Rhine with those their comrades had won on the Adige. Bernadotte himself, especially, had shown that he was already familiar with the new theatre of war and the manœuvres it required. ‘Prince Charles must have recognized at Gradisca him whose audacity and skill he had often feared in Germany,’ a point on which one would like to have heard the Archduke! Masséna was told that, having powerfully contributed to the conquest of Italy, he had now opened Germany to the army. ‘The combat of Tarvis, where the Republican thunder rolled above the clouds, will long be memorable, and the passage of this chain of the Alps, where the French have carried their victorious arms for the first time, renders your name still dearer to the country.’

# VIII

## VENICE

(April to August 1797)

'Pâques Véronaises.' Occupation of Venice. Ill feeling between the divisions. Desaix visits the army.

### CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

1797 Armistice on the Rhine.

July. Hoche and the Triumvirate fail in a projected *coup d'état*.

I HAVE mentioned earlier<sup>1</sup> that the two hostile armies for long had been fighting in neutral territory, belonging to the Republic of Venice. The French now held practically all the Venetian possessions on the mainland, and this occupation influenced the inhabitants. The Revolutionary party saw their own success in that of the French, and looked with hope to Bonaparte, who was founding Italian Republics; whilst the party who were fond of the old régime, offended by many of the proceedings of the French, regarded the invaders with horror, a feeling often encouraged by the priests. Now, when Bonaparte was so deeply committed in the advance on Vienna, a formidable outbreak occurred in his rear, in the territory mostly denuded of French troops. Accusations of bad faith have been made against him in this matter, and he is accused of secretly influencing the movement, but whatever his sins against Venice may have been later, it is certain that he could not have wished for any revolt in his rear at the very moment when it was so important for him to threaten Austria with his whole force.

On the 17th April 1797 came the 'Pâques Véronaises',<sup>2</sup> when the peasants round Verona rose, and, in conjunction with the inhabitants of the town and the Venetian troops, massacred all the French who fell into their hands. The insurrection spread, and the danger was made the greater as, the withdrawal of Joubert from the Tyrol having left Italy exposed, Loudon had come down the Adige with 3,000 Austrians and 6,000 Tyrolese,

<sup>1</sup> See p. 48-9.

<sup>2</sup> So styled after the 'Vêpres Siciliennes', the massacre of the French in 1282.



and, spreading proclamations against the French, had reached the hills above Verona when that town was attacked by the insurgents. Had he acted with rapidity and vigour the danger to Bonaparte would have been great. Fortunately Kilmaine and the Generals left in rear kept their heads and dealt capably with the insurrection: Balland, in the forts of Verona, fired on the town, whilst Kilmaine hurried up every man to his succour. It was well that Victor's division had been ordered up from the south; reaching Legnago on the 14th April and then marching through Padua, by the 18th it was at Treviso. Thence it was hurried back by Legnago to Isola Della Scala, south of Verona, and its approach, with that of the other columns, overawed the insurgents, whilst Loudon only hung on the hills watching the contest. By the 22nd April Kilmaine had informed Loudon of the signature of the preliminaries of peace at Leoben, so that the peril from the Austrians was over. Augereau had reached Milan in twelve days' journey on the 20th April, and being ordered on the 1st May to Verona, he arrived in that town on the 6th<sup>1</sup> and was placed in command of it and of the district: Peschiera, Legnago, and the country between the Adige and the Piave. Between him and Kilmaine the insurrection was soon suppressed. Victor, having dispersed the assemblages of peasants in the district round him, went to Padua, whilst Baraguey d'Hilliers, who also had been called up for the same purpose, occupied Treviso.

Some incidents of the struggle at Verona have an interest for us. The Austrian officer sent in by Loudon to announce the armistice concluded by Bonaparte at Leoben was the one-eyed Comte de Neipperg (who at that time could not have dreamt he would ever succeed Napoleon in the graces of a woman), who had just run some risk from the insurgents by refusing to join them. Then Augereau made the most of his position as governor of the town. On the 7th May he presided at the erection of a Tree of Liberty, when the portraits of the former Venetian governors were destroyed, oaths were taken, and a banquet was given in honour of the French officers. On the

<sup>1</sup> *Corr. Nap. Venise*, i. 116-20; *Corr. Nap.* iii, No. 1763, 1767. Landrieux, 264, makes Augereau reach Verona on the 17th May. Trolard, *Montenotte*, 343-94, gives the Veronese account, which (p. 361) makes Augereau arrive on the 6th May.

17th May he ordered the municipal officers to be in the Piazza Brà, where they found the garrison formed in square, and a number of peasants who had taken part in the insurrection were brought out before 'le supplice', the gallows, I presume. Then a pompous declaration was read by the General, announcing that he came to dry the tears of those who repented, and he released the prisoners, but: 'If gratitude does not speak sufficiently to your hearts, oh, then tremble! for the time of clemency will have passed for you.' However, there were plenty of executions. Next, on the 14th July, came a grand military fête in honour of the men of Augereau's division killed at Montenotte, when the General, addressing the shades of the fallen, told them that if Nature had refused him the eloquence worthy of the occasion, still, 'she has given me a heart capable of feeling what great things you have done, and a soul elevated enough to imitate them'. In a word Augereau, no doubt to his own delight, played the part of a patriot soldier of the early days of the Revolution.

Other events may not have been so pleasant to Augereau, whose character gave him no real weight. On the 29th May he called before him the members of the court martial sitting on the insurrection, and accusing them of having accepted large sums to acquit certain persons, the Bishop and others, he threatened to try them themselves next day. They were furious, and Colonel Beaupoil, the president, replied that they were ready to die if it could be proved that they had been unjust; that they did not deserve to be abused in such a manner; that they were honest men incapable of selling justice, but that Augereau himself had often sold it. Lieut.-Colonel Legrand spoke as violently, leaving Augereau speechless. How he tried to claim a large part of the spoil of the town is told farther on. He resided at first at the Palazzo Marioni, but on the 29th June he suddenly went to Milan, returning on the 16th, when, leaving his head-quarters at the Palazzo Marioni, he himself moved to the Palazzo Canossa. Still later, imitating Bonaparte at Momello (near Milan), he and his staff lived at the house of the 'ex-Noble' Gazola, a mile from Verona. On the 16th May he had been ordered to rejoin his division, then at Klagenfurt, but it was almost immediately sent to Verona. There Augereau remained until he went for the second and last time to Paris, about

the 27th July, when General Verdier took over his division. To finish with this division: a brave soldier, Verdier disgusted the men by his severity and by decreasing their rations, so that two regiments, the 43rd and the 51st, mutinied—the first, be it noted, not having behaved well at Arcola. On the 6th August Bonaparte sent Brune, from the division of Masséna, as the senior General of Brigade, to command the disaffected division, and on the 19th Brune arrived, and took up his residence at the Palazzo Canossa. On the 23rd August Bonaparte, with Berthier, arrived from Milan on his way by Padua to Passariano; he stopped with Brune and reviewed the division. Calling out the *sous-officiers* and the grenadiers, he spoke to them of the mutiny, advised obedience, and threatened severe punishment. Then, passing to politics, he professed himself pleased with the addresses of the division,<sup>1</sup> and spoke of his determination to do everything he could to preserve the happy Government they had, ‘speaking with so much fire and vigour that one must have been there to give an account of it’. Brune replied in the name of the division, declaring that the erring regiments repented, and, words sure to please Bonaparte, that they remained worthy of the Armée d’Italie. ‘The whole division shares the sentiments of its Commander-in-Chief, and swears to die rather than to let the Constitution be overthrown.’ Then he pleaded for forgiveness. Bonaparte replied, ‘I pardon, I pardon,’ and the scene was ended by the shouts of the men. This, however, is to anticipate events, and I must return to April, just after the armistice at Leoben.

Now Bonaparte himself was free to deal with Venice as he had wished to do. Already his A.D.C. Junot had been sent there with a threatening letter, and on the 15th April Junot had hectored the Senate, being placed on the right hand of the Doge. The Senate tried to excuse itself, but a fort fired on a French ship and Bonaparte was only too glad to get a pretext for attacking the Republic. The division of Baraguey d’Hilliers from the Tyrol, and that of Victor, sent back from Verona to Padua, were brought up to the end of the Lagoons, and Bonaparte, coming again to Palma on the 2nd May, issued a manifesto declaring war against the Republic. The Senate gave way, and Baraguey d’Hilliers with 5,000 to 6,000 men occupied Venice on

<sup>1</sup> See p. 279.



the 16th May 1797. This General was a man of ability<sup>1</sup> and high character, and he acted well in a difficult situation, offending no one and, according to Bonaparte's orders, keeping in the background as much as possible. On the 14th June General Lannes was sent to command the 2nd brigade under him. Colonel and A.D.C. Marmont, sent to watch this division, only joined it in Venice and soon left for head-quarters.

About the 23rd April Bonaparte had sent Masséna to Paris (Brune taking over his division temporarily) with the preliminary articles of peace, signed at Leoben on the 18th April and now ratified by the Emperor. Masséna was received by the Directory at Paris on the 9th May, with Colonel Mermet, A.D.C. to Hoche, sent by that commander with the colours just taken by the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' on its passage of the Rhine. Masséna spoke, praising the Armée d'Italie and Bonaparte, and saying that the soldiers of that army were 'the jealous lovers of the Republic and of the Constitution of the Year III',<sup>2</sup> but that their glory was nothing to them while there still remained enemies of their country. The President replied: 'Citizen-General, the pen of History, in transmitting to posterity the prodigies of valour which have illustrated the glorious campaigns of the Revolution, doubtless will not forget the Republican General so justly named "l'enfant chéri de la Victoire"—the brave Masséna.' After Glory, business; and Masséna, not perhaps caring much for History, took this as a good opportunity for recommending to the Directory a naval Captain, Infernet, who had been dismissed. One Director, Letourneur, at once exclaimed that the man was an anarchist. 'He is just like me,' replied Masséna loudly and emphatically, 'he is my cousin, and still more is he the cousin of the Republic.' The Admiral Truguet backed up this recommendation, and Masséna was quite right, for Captain Infernet, whether cousin of the Republic or not, was a brave and good officer, whom we shall find fighting well at Trafalgar and winning the respect of the English as well as that of the Emperor Napoleon.<sup>3</sup> Worn

<sup>1</sup> Under the Empire he had the task of teaching the Dragoons, in the morning that as cavalry they were irresistible by infantry: in the afternoon that, as infantry, no cavalry could break them.

<sup>2</sup> The Directorial Constitution of 1795, see Thiers, *Rev.* iii. 302-4.

<sup>3</sup> Rear-Admiral Louis-Antoine-Cyprien Infernet (1757-1815); commanded *l'Intrépide* at Trafalgar; *Vict.-et-Conq.* xvi. 185-6, 197-8; Le Marquis Gicquet

and unwell, Masséna remained six weeks in Paris, watching a curious state of affairs which will be better understood after studying the history of the *coup d'état* of Fructidor, towards which things were moving. It was evident that a struggle for predominance in the Government was about to take place, and the Directors who were to strike at Fructidor—Barras, Rewbell, and Larevellière-Lépeaux—and the Republican party, overwhelmed Masséna with civility, to gain his support and that of the Armée d'Italie. His name was put forward as a candidate for the post of Director, to fill the vacancy made in May by the retirement of Letourneur, and in the Council of the *Cinq-Cents* he received 193 votes; but it is improbable that he was anxious for the place, which fell to Barthélemy, who paid for his promotion by being deported at Fructidor. Leaving Paris at the end of June 1797, Masséna saw Bonaparte at Milan on the 12th July and had a long conference with him, relating what he had observed of the coming contest between the Republican party and the growing body of Constitutionalists and Royalists. Then he rejoined his division. The day before Bonaparte had sent his A.D.C. Lavalette to Paris to observe events there.<sup>1</sup>

While all this was going on the active divisions of the army were gradually brought back from the front, until, by orders of the 18th May, Masséna's, under Brune, was at Padua, Joubert at Bassano, Sérurier (who had taken over from Chabot again at Gratz on the 20th April), at Sacile on the Livenza, Victor at Osopo on the Tagliamento, and Delmas at Belluno, while Guieu handed over Augereau's division to him at Verona.<sup>2</sup> Each of the senior Generals had charge of a district; and Bernadotte had, besides his own division, that of Victor, with the reserve cavalry of Dugua at Trieste, so that he formed the rearguard of the army, which now was quartered on Venetian territory. The Armée d'Italie settled down to rest and to enjoy itself after its long struggles and its many hardships. Clothed, paid, and even drilled, the men presented a very different appearance from the ragged hosts which had limped barefoot on the road to victory. But with idleness came complaints. On the 18th May we find

des Touches (who served under Infernet), *Souvenirs d'un marin de la République*, *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1-15th July 1905; Desbrière, *Trafalgar*; *Fastes*, v. 469.

<sup>1</sup> Lavalette, i, pt. 2, 33, gives the wrong date, in May. It really was the 11th July; see *Corr. Nap.* iii, No. 2003.

<sup>2</sup> The intermediate stages can be followed in the *Correspondance*.

Bonaparte rather puzzled by some vague grievances of Bernadotte, who alleged that he received annoyances: 'I cannot conceive who can wish to cause any annoyance to you, when every day you render such striking services to the Republic.' Bernadotte had believed that Bonaparte was leaving the army: this, the commander said, was but one of a thousand unfounded rumours. Apparently he had wished for some other post, and Bonaparte, to soothe him, said that when peace was definitely made there was a plan for an expedition to England or Portugal, when he should have the choice of going to one or the other.<sup>1</sup> Later, about June 1797, Barras asserts that the Generals of the Armée d'Italie were discontented, and apparently were complaining to the Directory: 'Augereau proposes his resignation, Masséna is discontented, Victor, Bernadotte and Joubert each separately complains of the preference shown by Bonaparte to other Generals and of his haughtiness towards them.' The virtuous Directory wrote to each complainant, urging that the interests of the country required union, confidence, and subordination; but as the list includes almost all the Generals of Division there cannot have been much preference shown by Bonaparte. However, Bonaparte was smitten with the love of drill, and Roguet says: 'He seemed to appreciate his Generals a little less exclusively with regard to the battle-field, and henceforward the means of pleasing him was to be a man for detail.'

The moment the stress of war was removed difficulties began in the army between the old regiments of 'Italie' and the newcomers from the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', whose fine appearance and discipline, with the respect which the men showed for their officers, offended the slacker, rag-covered troops of 'Italie', who styled Bernadotte's men: 'l'armée des Messieurs'. As soon as Masséna's division came in contact with that of Bernadotte the men began this address of 'Messieurs', which offended the others and soon led to duels. The officers intervened, only to become entangled themselves in the disputes, and in the absence of Masséna in Paris Brune had not the authority required to master his men, so that to avoid a battle between the divisions that of Masséna had to be hurried off. Later the same disputes began with the division of Augereau, when that General issued a long address to his men, only part of which is generally quoted,

<sup>1</sup> *Corr. Nap.* iii, No. 1808, 18th May 1797.



lamenting the dispute and ordering that any one of his division using the word 'Monsieur', verbally or in writing, should be dismissed from his rank and be debarred from serving in the army; this seems to have been intended to stop the intentionally offensive use of the word and not to have been a mere Republican bravado. Whatever the ill feeling between the troops from the Rhine armies and those of the old army of 'Italie', the relations between Bernadotte and Bonaparte seem still to have been friendly enough, although the Commander-in-Chief complained of his new regiments. On the 26th March, at the beginning of the campaign, he wrote to Bernadotte, 'Wherever your division has passed there have been complaints about its discipline. The Commander-in-Chief has seen with regret that you have not made any examples. The Commander-in-Chief orders you to have the pillagers shot, otherwise no success in Germany is to be hoped for. The other divisions of the army have conducted themselves much better, and there is not one which, since the beginning of the fresh campaign, has not made some examples which have maintained discipline. The Commander-in-Chief cannot forget the inconveniences to which the armies of the "Rhin"<sup>1</sup> and of the "Sambre-et-Meuse" have found themselves exposed in consequence of pillage. The Generals of Division who have regiments from the Rhine have difficulty in bringing them under discipline. You have full powers. If you have careless officers, dismiss them temporarily: the Commander-in-Chief will approve everything.' One doubts whether this self-righteousness on the part of 'Italie' was quite justified, for on the 9th March we find Guieu writing from Trivignano<sup>2</sup> that he had found the town pillaged by Sérurier's men, and that his own men had not been 'plus sage', but had finished the ruin of the unfortunate inhabitants. 'The soldiers, given up to pillage, have refused to obey their leaders,' and one man, arrested for taking aim at his Lieut.-Colonel, who had tried to stop him plundering, had been allowed to escape from his guard. Guieu seems to have made no example and to have thought the intervention of Bonaparte to be necessary.<sup>3</sup> Bonaparte was on safer ground

<sup>1</sup> Bonaparte always so styled the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'.

<sup>2</sup> North-east of Palma.

<sup>3</sup> And see *ante*, p. 147-8 for similar complaints about Victor's division in the 2nd Southern expedition. (E.A.S.)

when, learning that General Delmas, who brought the troops from the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', had struck several soldiers with his cane, he told him that such correction was contrary 'to our principles and to the method of discipline established in the Armée d'Italie'; and Berthier was directed to call on him to conform to both. Delmas was a man of rather violent character. In 1801, when in command of Turin, he had to leave the place under escort to escape from the mutinied garrison; and he was disgraced by Bonaparte for his sarcasms on the occasion of the Concordat, only being employed again in 1813, when he was mortally wounded at Leipzig.<sup>1</sup>

One institution of the army, which I think lasted during the Empire, and which certainly was established in the regiment in which Suchet served, deserves mention. The French soldier objected to corporal punishment by his officers, and we have seen the horror of Bonaparte at the idea of a cane being used on one of his men. Stragglers, and the laggards and dastards who kept from the field of battle, were, however, dealt with by the men, who had their own code of punishment. Such offenders were brought before the old soldiers of their company, and, if found guilty, were placed in the time-honoured position of culprits and received on their rear so many blows of a shoe, 'gras', if delivered with the heel, and 'maigre', if with the sole. The soldier so punished was considered disgraced, and was not allowed to receive promotion or to enter the flank companies unless afterwards he behaved with noticeable bravery in the field. This system was so convenient that it was winked at or encouraged by the officers, and as Pelleport says: 'Cette discipline retenait beaucoup d'hommes dans les rangs.' A similar system existed in the English army, the punishment being delivered with a belt after trial by a soldiers' court martial, but this went the way of many other things after the Crimea.

Augereau and Masséna had both been sent to Paris in turn, and before the latter had returned Bonaparte sent the third of his lieutenants. On the 3rd June 1797 he wrote to the Directors that he was sending Sérurier with twenty-two colours, taken

<sup>1</sup> Général Antoine-Guillaume Delmas (1767-1813). Served as officer in the old army, in America, but had to leave in 1788. Commanded the 1st battalion of Volunteers of the Corrèze, and served on the Rhine till, in 1797, he came to Italy. *Biog. des Cont.* ii. 1286-8.

either in the last affairs in Germany or from the Venetians: 'General Sérurier has in the last two campaigns displayed as much talent as bravery and *civisme*. It was his division which won the battle of Mondovi, which so powerfully contributed to that of Castiglione, which took Mantua, and which distinguished itself at the passage of the Tagliamento and of the Isonzo, and, especially, at the capture of Gradisca. . . . General Sérurier is extremely severe with himself: he is sometimes so with others. A strict friend of discipline, and of the order and virtues most necessary to the maintenance of society, he disdains intrigue and intriguers, which has sometimes made him enemies amongst those men who are always ready to accuse of *incivisme* any one who wishes to see them submitted to their superiors. I consider that he will be very suitable to command the troops of the Cisalpine Republic' (then being formed in Italy). 'I beg, therefore, that you will send him back to his post as soon as possible.' Again, on the 13th June, probably the date when the General actually started, Bonaparte wrote: 'You will see in General Sérurier a brave and honourable soldier, as attached to the Republic as he is to honour and to the duties of the post he occupies with so much distinction. I shall not repeat to you the services he has rendered since the beginning of the war: you have often expressed to him your satisfaction.' This was praise which does honour to both men, a worthy tribute to the gallant old officer, who, without the flashy qualities of Augereau or the brilliance of Masséna, was a far more honourable man than either. Sérurier handed over his division to Fiorella, from Bernadotte's division, and on the 28th June he was received in state by the Directory, being presented by the Minister of War—or the official holding that office—Petiet, before a large audience. He himself addressed the Directory, simply and without any oratorical grace, but his language in assuring the Government of the attachment of himself and of his division to Republican institutions and to the Constitution of the time had a certain significance, as the elections held recently for the renewal of one-third of the two Councils had brought in a majority of the Royalist or moderate party, taken as hostile to the Jacobin rule. The President of the Directory replied in laudatory terms, saying that the colours took on a new lustre as presented by a warrior whose name would gain immortality in connexion with



his battles; and the General and his two A.D.C.s each received a pair of pistols, while arms of greater artistic value, manufactured at Versailles, were also presented later to the General. Among the spectators of Sérurier's reception were Madame Grand, the future Princess Talleyrand, and her friend, Cristoforo Spinola. Three days later the Directory issued an order for their expulsion.<sup>1</sup> Paris was seething with anticipation of the coming struggle between the two political parties, and Sérurier must have been glad to get away from it. Augereau probably had not arrived when Sérurier left the Capital in the first days of August. On the 9th August Bonaparte had directed that on Sérurier's arrival with his division, then at Trieste, Fiorella should return to the division of Bernadotte.

The next General to go to Paris from 'Italie' was Kilmaine, who left for the Capital on the 21st July, just before Augereau started on his second visit on the 27th. Some stroke was preparing at Paris, and Bonaparte wished to have other watchers there than his A.D.C. Lavalette and Augereau, so he either sent Bernadotte or else permitted him to go also, Friant replacing him temporarily with his division; later Victor was given the control of this division as well as of his own. On the 9th August Bonaparte told the Directory: 'After the battle of Rivoli I announced to you the capture of twenty-one standards and I only sent you fifteen or sixteen.'<sup>2</sup> General Bernadotte brings you the others, which were left by mistake at Peschiera. This excellent General, who made his reputation on the banks of the Rhine, is now one of the officers most essential to the glory of the army of Italy. He commands the three divisions which are on the frontier of Germany. I beg you to send him back to the army as soon as possible. I ought not to let this occasion pass without giving to his brave division, and to the other troops that came last year from the "Rhin" and from the "Sambre-et-Meuse" to the army of Italy, the tribute of praise which I owe to their services. On all occasions they have overthrown whatever confronted them. At the passage of the Tagliamento, as at the attack on Gradisca, they have shown that courage and ardent

<sup>1</sup> Lacombe, *Vie privée de Talleyrand*, Paris, Plon, Nourrit et Cie, 1910, see p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> Bonaparte reported the capture of 20 or 24 colours, and sent 11 with Bessières; *Corr. Nap.* ii, Nos. 1394, 1399, 1403.

zeal for the national glory which distinguishes the armies of the Republic. In General Bernadotte you see one of the firmest friends of the Republic, whose principles and character make him incapable of capitulating to the enemies of Liberty or Honour.' This was fully to adopt Bernadotte and his troops as part of 'Italie'. As for the mistake about the number of colours sent, such trophies were with 'Italie' as silver in the days of King Solomon.

Bernadotte had had a slight connexion with the curious affair of the Comte d'Antraigues, the Royalist conspirator. On the 21st May 1797 the Russian Minister, Mordinov, was passing through Trieste from Venice when he was stopped and taken, with his suite, to the head-quarters of Bernadotte, where the General told him that it was believed there was a person 'suspect' to the French Government with him, and called on him to name a man at whom he pointed. Mordinov acknowledged that this person was d'Antraigues, but claimed immunity for him as attached to the Russian mission. Bernadotte replied that d'Antraigues (an *émigré*) was 'believed to be the Ambassador of Louis XVIII, our enemy, and in consequence I declare to you that he is arrested. Had he been the stronger, he would have had us all shot: now that we are so, we exercise that right.'<sup>1</sup> Mordinov protested, but he had to go on his way without his follower. D'Antraigues had been trying in this manner to escape from Venice before the French entered the town, but he was a marked man, and the French Minister in Venice, in giving Mordinov his passports, had noted on them that they could not serve for d'Antraigues, 'agent of a French *émigré*, imaginary heir to the crown of France'; and he had warned Bernadotte, giving him the description of the man wanted. D'Antraigues was sent on to Milan, and Bernadotte had nothing further to do with the extraordinary affair. It is worth noting that on the 14th July 1797, d'Antraigues, kept in the hands of Bonaparte, wrote, if we may believe such an untrustworthy man, to Carnot, warning him that the *coup d'état* of Fructidor was preparing, and urging him to take the offensive against Barras and to have Bonaparte arrested by his secret enemies, Bernadotte and Kilmaine. Otherwise this d'Antraigues affair concerns Fructidor. If one could believe d'Antraigues, there was some discussion amongst the officers of 'Italie' about the change

<sup>1</sup> Pingaud, *D'Antraigues*, 154-8.

in the Government of France believed to be imminent, and General Dumas was in favour of the Duc d'Orléans, professing to have been one of three men sent to communicate with him at Hamburg, and to have been satisfied with his views. Kilmaine, with whom Vignolles, a leading member of the staff of the army, agreed, was against the Duke, whom he professed to have examined and judged—no doubt when both were with the 'Nord'—and to have found below mediocrity. Dumouriez, whatever he might say, thought the same; and the army would be strongly against the ideas of Dumas. Berthier, according to Kilmaine, had often summed up the Duke, presumably in the same manner, and must have communicated his verdict to Bonaparte. Kilmaine is represented as Royalist at heart, but saying of Louis XVIII, 'This is not the man we want.'<sup>1</sup> All this is probably true; and it will be remarked that nothing was then said of the Generals whom we know to have been thoroughly Republican in character, Augereau, Bernadotte, and Masséna.

In July 1797 the army received a distinguished visitor in the person of General Desaix, who came from the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', nominally commissioned by Moreau to get Bonaparte to settle some questions, in his negotiations for peace, regarding the contributions which Bavaria and the smaller states of Swabia had promised that army, but which they had not paid. In reality Desaix was anxious to see 'Italie' for himself. He reached Milan on the 27th July and Bonaparte informed the army of this, and that the General was about to visit 'the positions where the French have immortalized themselves', the army not erring on the side of modesty. To the Directors Bonaparte wrote: 'The brave General Desaix has come here to see the Armée d'Italie: what he tells me of the situation of the Armée du Rhin is not at all reassuring. As for the Armée d'Italie, I promise you that it is worthy of the Republic, and that if negotiations break down the Austrians shall pay for it.' All this was rather condescending to the Rhine armies; but Bonaparte soon fell under Desaix's personal charm, and a friendship was established between them which was only broken when the dead body of Desaix, stripped, and recognizable only by the long hair, lay on the field of Marengo.

No doubt what brought Desaix into the wake of Bonaparte

<sup>1</sup> Pingaud, *D'Antraigues*, 180-2.



was the whole position of that General in Italy: master of the land, paymaster of the Republic (sending 170 millions back to France, writes Desaix);<sup>1</sup> forming fresh states, negotiating with Austria much on his own initiative, and treating the army as his own. Everything was done to make officers and men proud of belonging to the Armée d'Italie; removal from it was to be a disgrace not to be thought of. 'He has never seen a regiment which he has not persuaded that he considered it the best in the army; he often speaks to them, and always says something telling. He has given to each regiment magnificent colours on which are written in very large gold letters the names of the battles where it has distinguished itself.' To these inscriptions had been added, as we know, happy phrases with which he had addressed them. The old Generals had been removed, and young ones, for instance Joubert and Lannes, had been put forward, while in Bonaparte's dispatches Generals found themselves lifted to fame, and Art was called in to hand their triumphs on to posterity. Contrast all this with the wretched position of such commanders as Jourdan and Moreau, unable to stir an inch without the Directory. And what fresh flight was Bonaparte about to take? Egypt was already talked of to Desaix.

The journal Desaix kept on this trip to Italy is good reading, and a soldier will remark how he, an officer of the old monarchical army, notes any one who came from it. His remarks on the Generals he met are very valuable, for we can trust them as made at the moment and not affected by later events. Berthier is described as short, fat, always laughing (for these were happy days), very busy, and the lover of Madame Visconti, a love which was to be most durable. To Reynier, Chief of the Staff in his own army, Desaix wrote that Berthier had not the same high reputation in Italy as elsewhere: 'We understand details better'. Desaix could get little information as to the details of the campaigns: 'They have no idea of writing of the war as we conceive it should be done: they surround themselves with much mystery'; and the loss of the *fourgon* with staff documents in the Castiglione campaign was made to cover all deficiencies.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Desaix, *Journal*, 257. *Corr. Nap.* iii, No. 2145, on the 3rd September 1797 told the Directory that the Armée d'Italie had procured 40 to 50 millions for the Republic, besides providing for its own maintenance.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 136 and note 3, for theories as to when this invaluable *fourgon* really was lost. (E.A.S.)

(It was in June 1797 that Berthier seems to have begun the systematic collection of the history of each corps.) Augereau was a 'fine man, good face, large nose, has served in every country, . . . est soldat à peu, vantard beaucoup', an excellent thumb-nail sketch. Later: 'A fact on Augereau. In a town in Romagna he enters a Mont-de-Piété, fills his pockets with diamonds and precious objects, places a sentry—whom he calmly has shot because the man took something.' Bernadotte is 'young, full of fire and vigour, with fine passions and plenty of character; very estimable, but he is not liked because he is considered to be "enragé"' (i.e. a Jacobin); 'his troops' (from the 'Sambre-et-Meuse') 'are the best turned out in the army'. Desaix seems not to have seen Masséna: perhaps they crossed in trips to Venice; but Solignac, the Chief of the Staff to that General, is described exactly as by Thiébault, 'very active, pillard à l'excès'. 'I have seen Sérurier: tall, fifty-five years old' (very old to Desaix, who was twenty-nine), 'comes from the neighbourhood of Soissons, was formerly Lieut.-Colonel; honest, estimable in every respect, considered to be an aristocrat but supported by General Bonaparte, who values and admires him'; a portrait which makes a good pendant to that of Augereau, and is equally true. 'Brune, General of Brigade, thirty-three years old, pretty tall, black hair, oblong face—a little narrow at bottom—, large black eyes, bilious complexion. Has been General for a long time. Was employed at Bordeaux and Marseilles in the times of the Terror. Brave, is clever, especially in the council.' Of General Victor Desaix tells us nothing except that he had brought from Rome a lady, probably not of high class, as we find her dining at Clarke's in company with the wife of the valet of General Fiorella. (This subject of the mistresses of officers was too much even for Bonaparte. 'How many faults', he said, 'did not Murat commit in order to establish his quarters in a *château* where there were women?') To Desaix Murat was 'a tall young man, coming from the 21st Chasseurs, much employed by the General' (Bonaparte), 'taken prisoner at Brescia, in love with Mme Ruga' (to whom he had a pronounced inclination at Brescia), 'brave, often employed in the advanced-guards, has distinguished himself'. Thus Murat was then in favour with Bonaparte. 'Lannes, extrêmement brave des braves, young, nice appearance, well made, elegant;

fine hair, face not very pleasing, crippled by wounds, fine carriages, the finest in Italy' (and only a General of Brigade), 'married. Has been at Rome: the Pope holding out his hand to be kissed, Lannes took it and shook it well.' Let us hope that this last story was not true. Of other Generals, suffice it to say that Dessoles, from the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', was, like Saint-Cyr, a good player on the violin.<sup>1</sup>

On Bonaparte Desaix naturally is reserved, at least until he left Italy, when he described him in a manner which makes his adherence to him the stranger. 'He is proud, dissimulating, vindictive, and never forgives. He follows his enemy to the end of the world, and is a great intriguer. He has much money, very naturally, since he receives the revenues of a whole country. He never presents any accounts. It is difficult to find anything to say of him in this connexion as everything is well arranged. However, the mines of Idria have been sold for three millions: they were worth five. . . . There has been a distribution amongst all the staff: the chief has had his share; the principal A.D.C. had 15,000 livres, the others 8,000 to 10,000. One of them, Junot, has received, they say in Romagna, 50,000 livres.' This is not a good character of Bonaparte, who certainly forgave enough, but we are not concerned with his private character.

It is interesting to know what Desaix thought of the army itself. In almost everything he considered that the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' had nothing to learn. His inspection of the country over which 'Italie' had fought explained its style of warfare. 'For 800 leagues there is not a place to put a squadron in line; everything is cut up by ditches, marshes, vines, trees, and plantations of all kinds: skirmishers and columns, that is the only kind of war that they can make.' The troops who had come to Italy from his own army, and who welcomed him heartily, considered themselves not so well off as in Germany. The climate had told on them, especially at first, and they did not live so well. In Germany they had got from the inhabitants bacon, potatoes, and vegetables of all sorts: here the people only had soup made of maize, and the peasants treated them badly. The ration bread was badly made, and meat was only given each second or third day, oil and some peas replacing it. Wine they had received often enough, but now the half pint came seldom.

<sup>1</sup> Général Marquis Jean-Joseph-Paul-Augustin Dessoles (1767-1828).



The men were not quartered on the inhabitants but were 'casernés'; for instance, at Como they were lying on straw in the cloisters set apart for them.

On one point Desaix surprised Bonaparte. When the latter had arrested d'Antraigues, proof, or at least matter for suspicion, of the treachery of Pichegru, formerly commander of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', had been found amongst the Count's papers, and had been forwarded to Paris. Thinking he would astonish Desaix, Bonaparte now told him of this, but the General only smiled, saying they had long known of it, Moreau having found the proof in the Klingin correspondence.<sup>1</sup> 'Moreau, Reynier, and I', said Desaix, 'alone are in the secret. I wanted Moreau to inform the Government immediately, but he would not do so. Pichegru is, perhaps, the only General who has got himself beaten on purpose,' alluding to the way in which Pichegru had, according to Desaix, in 1795 intentionally thrown the principal part of his forces on to the upper Rhine, to make the operations against Mayence fail. Desaix saw the danger in which this discovery placed Moreau, for Bonaparte had sent the documents to the Directory on the 10th June, and therefore he wrote to Moreau, advising him to inform the Government.<sup>2</sup> We shall see what happened when we deal with Fructidor. Desaix, of course, was implicated, but the support of Bonaparte saved him from being dismissed, although he lost the successorship to Moreau. Had he got the command instead of Augereau, in all probability Bonaparte would not have made peace, being able to rely on the support of the Rhine armies in the consequent campaign.

At last, probably on the 19th or 20th September 1797, Desaix left Passariano with a letter from Bonaparte and Clarke, the two French plenipotentiaries, charging him with the presenting to the Elector of Bavaria and the Duke of Würtemberg of dispatches signed that day, no doubt on the subject of the subsidies due from them to the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'; Desaix being authorized to pay what he got on this head into the chest of that army. He told Reynier that he was not without hope of success, but he acknowledged that the negotiators at Passariano had

<sup>1</sup> Phipps, ii. 402-4, for Pichegru's treachery. Ibid. 431, for capture of General Klingin's *fourgon*.

<sup>2</sup> Pingaud, *D'Antraigues*, 169; I do not understand the reference given by Caudrillier, *Trahison de Pichegru* (Paris, Alcan, 1908), 371, note 1.

abandoned the matter. I have dealt with his visit at some length as it is valuable to get an idea of how the Armée d'Italie differed from others in the eyes of a contemporary and competent witness, for one has to know a good deal about the armies on the Rhine and elsewhere to understand the different position of the commander and troops of 'Italie'.

## IX

### THE TREATY OF CAMPO FORMIO

(August to November 1797)

Bonaparte defies the Directory. Sérurier in Venice. Activities of Berthier. Plunder and peculation in the army.

#### CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

- 1797 4th September. *Coup d'état* of Fructidor.  
15th September. Death of Hoche.  
23rd September. Augereau appointed to command both Rhine armies.  
11th October. English fleet defeats the Dutch at Camperdown.

As the autumn of 1797 drew on all interest was attached to the negotiations with Austria which were being carried on by Bonaparte and Clarke, at first at Udine, where the Austrian plenipotentiaries met them, Bonaparte sometimes going back to Milan to look after his army. On or just before the 27th August Bonaparte fixed his quarters at Passariano, not far from Udine; Clarke joined him, and on the 31st August the formal negotiations began at Udine, being then held alternatively there and at Passariano. The event of Fructidor caused the recall of Clarke,<sup>1</sup> and on the 28th September the Austrians were notified that Bonaparte alone would continue the negotiations. Now that General took the bit between his teeth. The Directory insisted that the Emperor should not have Venice, whilst Bonaparte determined to make that Republic the price for peace. It is asserted that he now acted for his personal interests, but those really counselled war, for otherwise he lost position and power. His army was large, 80,000 men, but that of Austria in his front had also been increased, and the whole of its strength could have been thrown on him before the French troops on the Rhine could draw off the pressure. The two former armies on the Rhine, the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' and the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', had been amalgamated and now formed one body, the Armée d'Allemagne: therefore on the choice of a commander for this large force all depended. Hoche was dead, Moreau was disgraced,

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 312-13.



as really was Desaix, whose appointment Bonaparte had pressed for. To his intense dismay his former lieutenant, Augereau, was entrusted with the command. Astonished at and disgusted with this appointment, Bonaparte declaimed against the stupidity of the men who, when Augereau had been sent to them, had mistaken his boasts and swagger for talent and generalship. He himself had no doubt as to the incompetence of Augereau: and the situation was the more serious as the Directory intended to make success dependent on the army of Augereau, refusing to reinforce Bonaparte. When at last, too late, they changed their minds, they only made a faint promise of 6,000 men, and with their usual crass folly they would not accept the treaty by which Bonaparte could have got a contingent of 10,000 men from Piedmont. No doubt by a fresh miracle he and his marvellous troops might have won another campaign, and it is easy for Thiers to suggest that 'une campagne de plus' would have driven Austria from Italy: Bonaparte knew how little turned the scales of Victory. In later years we shall find both him and Wellington, commanders with years of success behind them, dwelling on the inevitable uncertainty of battles, and here defeat would have meant ruin. On the 13th October his secretary, Bourrienne, woke him up to show him the mountains covered with snow. This was enough. In a fortnight, he said, the snow would fill the roads and passes. 'It is finished: I make peace. Venice shall pay the cost of the war and for the Rhine boundary. The Directory and the lawyers may say what they like.'

On the 17th October 1797 Bonaparte signed a most advantageous treaty with Austria. France received from Austria the Netherlands, that is, Belgium; and Austria agreed to support the cession by the Holy Roman Empire of the left bank of the Rhine, with Mayence and the *tête de pont* of Mannheim on the right bank. Venice was partitioned, France getting the Ionian Islands (which she already held and to which Bonaparte attached exaggerated importance, saying they were more valuable for France than the whole of Italy), and the Albanian possessions of Venice below the gulf of Drina. Austria got the mainland possessions of Venice to the line of the Adige, Istria, Dalmatia, her Adriatic islands, and the Bocche di Cattaro. The Emperor recognized the Cisalpine Republic, which was to include

Lombardy, Bergamo, Brescia, Cremona, Mantua, Peschiera, that part of the Venetian mainland on the right bank of the Adige not given to Austria, Modena, Massa-Carrara, and the three Legations of Bologna, Ferrara, and Romagna. Another conference, at Rastadt, was to decide the peace between the Holy Roman Empire and the French Republic. Bonaparte knew quite well that he was acting against the instructions of the Directory, and that if they had dared they would have disapproved; his boldness is the more remarkable if we consider the position of other commanders in relation to the Government. Jourdan and Moreau were both disgraced. Hoche, the hope of the Revolutionary party not long before, and anxious to carry out a *coup d'état*, had retired from Paris, recoiling before the frown of Carnot.<sup>1</sup> Bonaparte himself had warned the Directory that his weakened health made rest necessary, and asked for a successor. Nothing was left for him, he said, but to follow the example of Cincinnatus, and in retiring to give an example of respect for the magistrates and of aversion for the military régime which had destroyed so many Republics and ruined so many States. Now, the treaty signed, he knew that the Directors would not dare to disavow it, and, forgetting all aversion to a military régime, he invited the Directory to concentrate their activities on destroying England: 'That done, Europe is at our feet.' In all this neither he nor his critics dreamt either of consulting any of his Generals or of replacing him for a fresh campaign. Alexander might offer to dismount, but only one man could bestride Bucephalus. As for fresh wars, he spoke of England, but he was already thinking of Malta and Egypt.

The treaty when signed bore the name of Campo Formio, by an odd arrangement, for no negotiations had been carried out there. As Bonaparte had lived at Passariano and the Austrian plenipotentiaries at Udine, and negotiations had been carried on at those places alternatively, a fresh point, Campo Formio, placed between the two, was chosen for the actual signatures. Bonaparte had a room prepared at Campo Formio, but sent an A.D.C. to ask the Austrians not to stop there—though appearances would be saved by dating the treaty from there—but to come on and dine with him at Passariano, where the treaty was at last signed on the 17th October. At the dinner which

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 282-3.

followed, Bonaparte, rejoiced at the result, chaffed the Austrians on the crosses and ribbons that they would receive, to which they replied, 'And you, General, will get a decree proclaiming that you have deserved well of *la patrie*: every country has its customs and every people their baubles', a wise saying that the Republicans might well have taken to heart.

A most disagreeable task now fell to Sérurier, probably on account of his well-established rectitude. By the treaty of Leoben Venice fell to Austria; but before handing it over Bonaparte, whose troops held it, determined to remove all that he could of the warlike stores and vessels, and of the works of art. On the 18th October, therefore, Sérurier was ordered to move his division into Venice, the cavalry and artillery being placed at Mestre. Then the work of plundering the town began, much being done officially according to the orders of Bonaparte, which Sérurier had to carry out, and much being done by and for individuals, which Sérurier tried to prevent; and his task was made the harder and more invidious as Baraguey d'Hilliers, who had held the place previously, had had the easy office of simply keeping order. Of course the inhabitants resented bitterly the conduct of the French, but Bonaparte declared that the French Republic had never adopted the principle of making war for the sake of other people. Sérurier came in for much abuse, and he had to deny the allegation that he was about to burn the arsenal and pillage the town; still, he was forced to threaten severity to stop the assassination of his men. The Austrians were indignant at the removal of things valuable to them, and the commander of their force, which had arrived outside the place ready to take it over, protested to Sérurier and wanted to enter, to guard the arsenal, which Sérurier refused to allow. His personal honour was attacked, but he had no difficulty in justifying himself to Berthier, who replied that his probity and morality were too well established for there ever to be any idea of inquiring into his conduct because he had possibly neglected some formalities. To Bonaparte himself, then away from Italy, Berthier reported that he had gone into the conduct of Sérurier, who 'was worthy of his reputation for probity; that all the good possible was said of him, and that from all reports the command of Venice was well placed in his hands'. At last, the arsenal ravaged, the ships removed, the



Bucentaur destroyed, the Horses of Saint Mark sent to Paris, Sérurier evacuated Venice, on the 18th January 1798, and the people, sick of the French, received the Austrians joyfully. The whole French connexion with Venice is a revolting subject, the vileness of which was concealed from the French themselves by their resentment at the hostility they had met with, as they considered, from the Venetians, and especially at the murders at Verona. As for Sérurier, he personally had acted as well as possible in a sorry business, and had kept his hands clean. The troops of 'Italie' were by this time on the march for the Armée d'Angleterre, at whose head was Bonaparte, and Sérurier soon joined that force and commanded a division at Rennes.

All this time Berthier had not been idle. The cessation of the hitherto constant movement of the army gave him some spare time, which he utilized in collecting in his office the official histories of each corps. Then he was sent by Bonaparte on the 7th September 1797 from Passariano to Venice, to inquire into matters there and to see Admiral Brueys, who was there with a squadron which Bonaparte wanted protected from the English. Probably also he had some secret instructions concerning Bonaparte's intention to hand Venice over to the Austrians. Next, on the 15th September he was ordered back to Milan, although he may have started later,<sup>1</sup> to see the Directory of the Cisalpine Republic about the deficiencies in the equipment of their legion, and to inspect the fine contingent, led by General Fontanieu, which the King of Sardinia held ready, under a convention, to join the French forces. This work done, Berthier rejoined head-quarters at Passariano about the 3rd October. On both occasions his place had been taken during his absence by General Dessoles. On the 18th October, the day after peace was signed, Bonaparte sent Berthier and the savant Monge<sup>2</sup> to Paris with the formal treaty, writing to the Directory, 'General Berthier and the citizen Monge bear to you the definite treaty of peace just signed between the Emperor and ourselves. General Berthier, whose distinguished talents equal his courage and patriotism, is one of the pillars of the Republic as well as

<sup>1</sup> See the later orders given him, *Corr. Nap.* iii, No. 2214, 2225, &c.

<sup>2</sup> Gaspard Monge, Comte de Péluse under the Empire (1746-1818). A distinguished savant, who went with Bonaparte to Egypt. Michaud, *Biog. Univ.* . . . xxix, 361-72.

one of the most zealous defenders of Liberty. There is not a victory of the Armée d'Italie to which he has not contributed. I have no fear that friendship would make me partial if I were to recall here the services which this brave General has rendered to the country, but history will undertake that care, and the opinion of the whole army will be the foundation for the testimony of history.' Then, praising the knowledge and patriotism of Monge, he went on, 'Receive, I pray you, with equal honour the distinguished General and the learned physician. Both adorn their country and render the name of France celebrated. It would be impossible for me to send the definite treaty of peace by two men more distinguished in different spheres.' If it be thought that Bonaparte, in dealing with the qualities of his Chief of the Staff, might have dwelt more on his talents and less on his bravery, it must be remembered that it was for courage that he always esteemed men most. Berthier and Monge arrived in Paris in the night of the 25th October, and matters were so urgent that the President of the Directory was roused from his bed and at 6 a.m. next morning the Directory received the two messengers.<sup>1</sup> In reality the Directors were opposed to the treaty, but the news of peace was too popular for them to dare to refuse ratification. On the 31st October 1797 Berthier was formally received, with what he styled an august ceremony, when his own eloquence, only that of a soldier, as he modestly put it, transported and affected the audience, whose repeated applause showed well enough the gratitude they felt to the Armée d'Italie. 'To you, my dear General, it is all due to you,' he wrote to Bonaparte. In the evening there was an illumination. 'Your name is cherished; you are as much loved as you are admired.' If Berthier wrote like a courtier, he also wrote and acted like a gentleman. Larevellière-Lépeaux, the President of the Directory, whilst alleging that Monge displayed the greatest servility before him, says that Berthier behaved properly. To his commander Berthier wrote: 'I have read, General, the letter you sent with me; I am overwhelmed with gratitude. The eulogy you have given me is not beyond what I should have wished to do, but far beyond what I have done. The whole desire of my heart is never to separate from such a great man, from such a friend, as

<sup>1</sup> La Jonquière, *L'Expédition d'Égypte (1798-1801)*, 5 vols., Paris, Charles Lavanzelle, 1899-1907. (See vol. i. 41.)

you.' No doubt he was sincere: it is a pity that he ever let himself be overborne by circumstances. Certainly he had not exaggerated his reception or the effect of his speech, as a letter from Talleyrand to Bonaparte testified.<sup>1</sup>

Bonaparte now prepared to go to Rastadt. Kilmaine was left in command of the army, with Leclerc, the husband of Pauline Bonaparte, as Chief of the Staff. Masséna alone of the leading Generals was left with his division. (In February 1798 he went to relieve Berthier in the command at Rome. Then both Berthier and Masséna left Italy in the course of 1798, Berthier to become Chief of the Staff to the Armée d'Angleterre under Bonaparte, and Masséna to command the Armée d'Helvétie in Switzerland.) All things in Italy being settled as far as possible, Bonaparte left Milan on the 17th November. He sent Murat on ahead<sup>2</sup> and took with him as travelling companions, says Lavalette, his secretary Bourrienne, three A.D.C.s, Duroc, Lavalette, and Marmont, and his doctor, Ivan. The other A.D.C.s, Eugène Beauharnais and Junot, with General Lannes, must have followed. Lieut.-Colonel Bessières, with his Guides, probably marched later: we shall find them as part of the Armée d'Angleterre in 1798 at Rouen. Lavalette says that Carnot, having escaped from Fructidor, had taken refuge at Geneva, and that Bonaparte had a hint given to him to go away immediately, in order to avoid a persecution he could not avert from him. This is a mistake: Carnot had already left Geneva and was at Nyon, on the north of the lake of Geneva, where he joined in the illumination which greeted the General on his way to Rastadt. Indeed, as Carnot says, Bonaparte had arrested in Geneva a banker called Bontemps who was suspected of bringing him there.<sup>3</sup> Bonaparte's journey was hurried: he would not see Neckar; the *château* where Voltaire had lived was, like Jerusalem in future years, passed by as not being on the route; and the battle-field of Morat was only visited to occupy a delay caused

<sup>1</sup> *Corr. Nap. Italie, Venise*, ii. 402.

<sup>2</sup> This has been denied by writers who assert that Murat, in disgrace, remained in Italy. But Bonaparte's letter of 16th November is addressed to him at Rastadt, and Bonaparte's letter from Paris of the 24th January 1798 to Berthier tells him that Murat was going to the Armée d'Italie. See Chavanon-Saint-Yves, *Murat*, 30; *Le Général Colbert, Traditions, souvenirs et documents touchant sa vie*, Paris, Berger-Levrault, 1888, p. 107.

<sup>3</sup> *Mémoires sur Carnot par son fils*, 2 vols., Paris, Hachette, 1893. See vol. ii, pp. 184-7.



by an accident to his carriage. Offenbach, the head-quarters of Augereau, then commanding the *Armée d'Allemagne*, was the scene of an act of rudeness on the part of that blusterer which I tell elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> On the 25th November Bonaparte reached Rastadt, where he found Berthier, come from Paris with the treaty of peace well engrossed.

At the moment Berthier seems to have had an eye on the Ministry of War, then held by his former friend General Schérer, who had commanded 'Italie' before Bonaparte. He writes to Bonaparte, before they met at Rastadt: 'As for the Ministry of War, they will await your return here before determining on any change. I shall wait to speak to you of what concerns me in that connexion.' We hear nothing more of this, and Schérer, who had only been appointed in July 1797, held the post until he went to command in Italy in February 1799. As for the Government, Berthier was fully satisfied with it. He would, he told Bonaparte, start for Rastadt on the 7th or 8th November and arrive on the 11th or 12th; he would meet Bonaparte there, and then proceed to rejoin the *Armée d'Italie*, which he was to command instead of Kilmaine. Bonaparte, who reached Rastadt on the 25th November, told the Directory next day that Berthier had given him the formal copy of the treaty of peace, which he hoped would content the Austrian plenipotentiaries, 'as it is very fine, and well gilt on the edges'. Berthier, as I have said, was to have gone on to Italy after having received instructions from his commander, but as Bonaparte unexpectedly went to Paris, where he arrived on the 5th December, Berthier returned to the Capital with him; but on the 12th December he was ordered to start for Italy, and to be at Milan by the 18th or 19th. He was to command the army, and to carry out the evacuation of the territory of Venice ceded to Austria. He arrived in Milan on the 22nd December.

Before leaving the *Armée d'Italie*, one subject must be dealt with which is both disagreeable and difficult: that is, the peculation and plundering which occurred in it. One need have no Pharisaical spirit in dealing with this: every army has plundered if it has had the chance; and if the English army thinks it has done little in this way, it must be agreed that in the Napoleonic wars it had little opportunity, for in Spain it worked in a friendly

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 315-16.

and poor country. When he was about to leave that land Wellington had several thousand marauders out in the mountains, and one body, composed of both English and Spanish, became really formidable. As for our Navy, was not Rodney said to have over-gilded his laurels? Italy was rich; the French army poured into it starving and unclothed, and the men had to provide for themselves. It must often be difficult to distinguish between the necessary levies or requisitions and those made for private advantage; for instance, Sérurier, for absolutely necessary purposes, had to sell the salt and biscuits in the stores of Venice without waiting for the necessary but too tedious forms to be complied with, but it was proved that he gained nothing personally by this. When a sum of 100,000 francs had been raised by Joubert, Bonaparte himself, anxious as he was to suppress abuses, suggested that it had been required for the division; and the 67,000 livres for which Suchet was called on to account may well have come in the same category,<sup>1</sup> being perhaps part of his expenditure for the clothing of the division of Masséna, with which he had been entrusted. Still, unfortunately, there is no doubt that there was much speculation in Italy, and that Augereau and Masséna were great offenders. General Clarke, sent to the army by the Directory not only to negotiate but to watch it and its commander, gave great offence by his report on the Generals, what he said being exaggerated by others and drawing down on him the wrath of Augereau, so that he became a victim of Fructidor. Hardly had the army reached the plains of Italy than Augereau was at work, and during the first advance Bonaparte learnt that he had filled a *fourgon* with silver articles obtained illegally, no doubt from churches. This *fourgon* became legendary, and in June 1796 it received the plunder of the richest jeweller in Bologna, Augereau explaining that the man 'n'aimait point les Français', of whom really he was a partisan. All was fair game to Augereau, and he sold for his own benefit 160 horses captured from the Austrians at Legnago, getting 60,000 francs by this swindle. It was the discovery of this fact by Bonaparte which partly caused the pathetic complaint of his health which Augereau made in September 1796.<sup>2</sup>

The attitude of the robbers towards one another shows how degrading the whole affair was. Augereau, immediately after

<sup>1</sup> *Corr. Nap.* iii, No. 1954.

<sup>2</sup> p. 98.

his arrival at Verona 'comme une bombe' in May 1797,<sup>1</sup> went straight to claim his part of the spoil from Landrieux, left in command by Kilmaine, and when told that Kilmaine had put aside 8,000 livres to indemnify him for the loss of his horses, declared that this was mere mockery and became so violent that he nearly struck Landrieux. Informed of this, Kilmaine sent word to Landrieux that he was to show Augereau how he could indemnify himself otherwise: 'Act so that every one may be satisfied.' Landrieux took an escort of fifteen Hussars, ready, he says, to arrest the General and take him to prison if he attempted to resist or to strike him; for the nomination of Augereau to command had not then been received. This time Augereau was more moderate, and Landrieux told him that the municipality would let him have five vessels loaded with spices, belonging to the Government of Venice and worth 500,000 francs. The municipality would buy these from him, particularly as General Chabran was about to remove them, and they preferred to pay Augereau, who was coming to command, rather than Chabran, who would no longer be of any use to them. Augereau was delighted; Landrieux became 'my dear friend', and was promised half the spoil: 'Il tiendra parole comme je danse.' Fancy if Bonaparte at Mombello had learnt that Augereau had been carried off to prison by the plunderer Landrieux! The staggering thing is that the letter of Landrieux to his accomplice, Kilmaine, recounting his transactions with Augereau, finishes, 'Please inform the General-in-Chief of all this.'<sup>2</sup> Augereau's ignorance of anything concerning art was great, and probably diminished the value of his booty. For instance, he sneered at the collection of pictures and statues in the collection of the Count Bevilacqua in Verona, and laughed at the care taken of copper medals, but all the medals in gold and silver he pocketed, sending those in silver gilt to his men and explaining that he was the sworn enemy of superstition! In all such matters he was but a glorified brigand, and here, as Madame Pellegrini wrote, he destroyed a collection that it had taken two centuries to make. 'So much the worse for you, for the General-in-Chief, and for History.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> p. 180 and note 1.

<sup>2</sup> Trolard, *Montenotte*, 389-90, quoting Landrieux (not yet published), Chapters XLIII and XLIX.

<sup>3</sup> Trolard, *Montenotte*, 386-7.



The Verona affair is a good specimen of the system of plunder which Bonaparte was unable to prevent. When the insurrection was suppressed the town had been made to pay three million livres, the nominal figure being put at 1,800,000, of which the officers and men engaged received 700,000. The Generals concerned did better, for Kilmaine, who relieved the place, took 200,000, Balland, who commanded in Verona, and Augereau, who arrived at the end, the same sum, and Landrieux, Chief of the Staff to Kilmaine, 150,000. Bonaparte, learning something of this, authorized the payment of an allowance of a fortnight's pay to the Generals and officers engaged, but he required the return of all that had been received over that amount; and Kilmaine and Augereau were specially ordered to send in a copy of their accounts for the sum of 200,000 livres which each had received from the contribution imposed on Verona, Augereau being also called on to account for another 300,000 which he had got from the same source. The pay of these Generals was to be stopped till this were done. Kilmaine took the matter with a high hand, and, according to Landrieux, refused to repay a *sou*, forcing Bonaparte to cancel the order. Kilmaine wrote to Berthier that he had placed Landrieux in arrest for complying with an order sent direct to him for his accounts, this apparently being merely a phrase, as Landrieux played the same part in the money matters of Kilmaine as Solignac did in those of Masséna. Finally Kilmaine, requesting that his letter might be sent to the Minister of War and to the Government, applied to be transferred to another army. This was the man to whom Bonaparte soon had to hand over his army. As for the soldiers, they had been promised the pillage of Verona, and though there had been some plundering it was supposed not to have been general, so Bonaparte allowed the men each an allowance of 48 livres. Augereau then claimed a corresponding sum for the Generals and officers, but Bonaparte replied angrily that Augereau would feel the 'indécence' of giving them an allowance instead of plunder in which they had no right to share. Augereau must have tried some recriminations, for Bonaparte denied that any horses had gone from Verona for Joséphine, and that Berthier had received 36,000 livres. Bonaparte was careful about presents to Joséphine, and on the 22nd July 1796 he was writing to her that she was to be sure to return

to Miollis the casket of medals that he had given her: 'Men have evil tongues and are so wicked that one must be in order in everything.' Joséphine thought differently, and we know how in 1800 she got Berthier and Bourrienne to conceal from her husband that she had secured a 'present' of a collar of pearls.<sup>1</sup>

Masséna did not flaunt his booty as Augereau did, but he plundered well, concealing his spoils, at first at least, with *curés* of villages. From the contributions levied in Piedmont he retained 300,000 livres; and in September 1796 he wrung from two *curés* a mass of silver and church vessels, besides 310,077 francs, even if another seizure of more vessels from churches, and 150,000 francs, did not fall to him. His Chief of the Staff, Solignac, acted for him in such matters. Even when at Leoben, a contribution of 1,000 ducats was levied, and although Bonaparte called on Solignac to disgorge this sum, no doubt it had not gone into *his* pocket. Bonaparte's inquiries into such matters were met by an offer of Masséna's resignation, and there were many other scandals. For instance, at Verona on the 13th July 1797, when directed by Bonaparte to give a dinner to the Neapolitan officers, Masséna called on his involuntary host, Count Marinelli, to furnish a dinner for fifty persons, with table linen, china, plate, and everything except the food. The Count was assured that he need have no anxiety about these things: Masséna, honest man, took the responsibility; besides, the Count's Intendant would direct everything. We can now understand why these two Generals rivalled one another for the command of the expedition into the southern provinces in January 1797.

Bonaparte and Berthier were acquitted by Clarke: the commander had acted irregularly in seizing funds, but these had gone for necessary purposes, in gifts made openly to officers, and in the cost of espionage. He spoke and acted too strongly against peculators to be one himself, and it was the inaction, and indeed crimes, of the civil functionaries that had forced him to act where they should have done. Bourrienne, exaggerating the amount of money Bonaparte brought back from Italy, says: 'No one will ever accuse him of having peculated. He was an inflexible administrator; frauds irritated him, and he had

<sup>1</sup> Bourrienne, Fr. ed. iii. 292-4; Eng. ed. of 1885, i. 323-5.

thieves prosecuted with all the vigour of his character.<sup>1</sup> As for Berthier, every one spoke of his probity, which also practically implied that of his commander. Some of the worst offenders were the Commissioners sent by the Government: Salicetti 'has the reputation of being the most shameful thief with the army'. Such were the tools Bonaparte had to use.

<sup>1</sup> See Clarke in Bourrienne, Fr. ed. i. 371-86. No mention of the Generals is made in this copy.



## X

### THE BREAK-UP OF BONAPARTE'S ARMÉE D'ITALIE

(May to December 1797)

The A.D.C.s and their missions. Murat in the Valtelline. Suchet's promotion. Dissatisfaction of Bernadotte. 'Italie' as a school for Marshals.

#### CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

1797 December 20th. Failure of peace negotiations between England and France.

For further Contemporary Events see Chapters VIII and IX.

BEFORE ending this account of Bonaparte's army of Italy, some minor personages have to be accounted for. Colonel and A.D.C. Marmont we have last seen when he had been sent from Gratz to accompany Baraguey d'Hilliers in his occupation of Venice in May, but had only reached him when he was already in that town. Then Marmont left with important papers for Bonaparte which that General was waiting for, but instead of going straight to Mombello, where his chief was, Marmont, enticed by some love affair, chose to stay for twenty-four hours in Milan. This he excuses on account of his youth, but he was then 23. When he did arrive, Bonaparte naturally was furious, and spoke of sending him back to his regiment, the 2nd of Horse Artillery; but every one interceded for him and he himself showed his regret, so that Bonaparte, always unwilling to lose any one to whom he was accustomed, forgave him. It is much to the credit of Marmont that he constantly mentions the kindness he received from the man whom he took the first available opportunity to betray. Later, Marmont was sent to act as Commissioner to the Congress of Reggio, composed of Deputies from the three Legations of Modena, Ferrara, and Bologna, which, with Venice, Bonaparte was proposing to form into the Cispadane Republic, but which eventually formed part of the Cisalpine Republic. As Marmont himself says, 'It was odd enough to see a young officer of 23 at the head of this Congress composed of old and serious men.'

Another A.D.C., Lavalette, was sent on the 27th May 1797 to Genoa with a letter to the Doge, for the Genoese had attacked the French in the town and had even burnt a man-of-war, the *Modeste*. Bonaparte was anxious that the Genoese Republic should settle this matter itself, so instead of carrying out the policy of the Directors, who wished to annex it, he sought to end the matter by insisting on reparation within twenty-four hours. Faipoult, the French Minister in the town, was horrified to find that Lavalette was to present the letter in full Senate, and declared that it was an unheard-of thing for a stranger to enter the minor Council, presided over by the Doge. Lavalette replied that it would be an unheard-of thing for an order from Bonaparte not to be executed, that Faipoult must warn the Doge of his arrival, and that in an hour he would proceed to the Palace: he did not care for the forms of procedure of the Republic or for any possible danger to himself. This he did, presented his letter to the Doge in council, and then retired, leaving the Council obviously in a state of anger and consternation, and hearing the words: 'Ci batteremo'—'We will fight'. However, the Senate gave way and a Provisional Government was instituted. Lavalette prepared to return next day, glad to get out of the excited town, when to his annoyance a ship arrived with Madame Bonaparte Mère and two of her daughters, Caroline, the future Queen of Naples, and Pauline.<sup>1</sup> Informed of what Lavalette believed to be their danger from the mob, Madame Mère, if I may anticipate that title, replied: 'I have nothing to fear from them, since my son holds in his hands eminent persons of the Republic as hostages. Tell him promptly of my arrival; to-morrow morning I shall continue my journey.' Lavalette started with her, preceded by some cavalry pickets, and she reached Milan safely. Then Lavalette was sent by Bonaparte to Paris, on a mission to ascertain the state of parties there, but this is a matter for the chapter on Fructidor. While on the subject of the A.D.C.s of Bonaparte, on the 30th June 1797 Berthier informed the Minister of War that Bonaparte had nominated 'le citoyen Eugène Beauharnais, sous-lieutenant auxiliaire au 1<sup>er</sup> régiment de hussards', as one of his A.D.C.s. 'This young citizen, interesting on account of his youth and talents, is the son of

<sup>1</sup> See Turquan, *Souveraines et grandes dames: les sœurs de Napoléon*, Paris, La Librairie illustrée, n.d.

General Beauharnais, whose loss the country will long regret.' Though Bonaparte had married the widow of the General, this was a bold phrase, as Beauharnais had been executed as a traitor. Eugène had only just arrived from France and now joined his step-father, who had much affection for him, justified by his good qualities.

General Murat's proper place was with a brigade of the division of Bernadotte at Udine, but in June 1797 at least he seems to have been at Brescia, apparently clinging to his mistress, for Bonaparte ordered him to rejoin his brigade. Murat must have complained, and Bonaparte wrote in reply on the 21st June that he had only received that day his letter of the 8th June. 'I know the consideration I ought to give to your military talents, your courage, and your zeal. I have never had a thought which might be even the least thing in the world unfavourable' (to you), 'but I thought you were more necessary with your division than with your mistress at Brescia. Je vous salue.' This is friendly enough, and contradicts all idea of a disgrace at this period. Then he was employed on missions which show that confidence was placed in him: for instance, on the 3rd August 1797 he was sent to Reggio, Modena, Bologna, Ferrara, Imola, Faenza, Ravenna, Forli, Rimini, and as far south as Ancona, to call in all the cavalry detachments and all horses, saddles, &c., which might be in the different depots there. He went, or intended to go, to Rome as well, for we find Joséphine writing to some unnamed person there, asking him to give Murat all the facilities he could, and if the General wanted money to give it to him—she would keep count of it; but she was not a good payer. She also asked that all the commissions which she had entrusted to her correspondent should be handed to Murat, no doubt jewellery and dresses. Meantime on the 5th August he was shifted from the division of Bernadotte to the 3rd cavalry division, then being formed under Rey at Castelfranco, or Ponte-San-Marco, so that he rejoined his proper arm. Kellermann  *fils*  went with him. Murat was now much at Mombello, Bonaparte's head-quarters, where he was well received by Joséphine. Next Murat was sent on a really confidential mission. The Valtelline was in conflict with the Ligue des Grisons, or the *Lignes grises*, the question being whether, having been subject to the Grisons, the Valtelline should be admitted as a



fourth 'Ligue', or, as it desired, be joined to the new state, the Cisalpine Republic, which Bonaparte was establishing. Both parties asked for the mediation of Bonaparte, who accepted the office on the 9th September; he also sent Murat with a column of a Light Infantry regiment and 60 Hussars to the frontier of the Valtelline, to stop the disorder caused, he said, by want of any governing body. Murat sometimes is said to have acted as President of an Assembly and to have decided between the two bodies, but all that he was told to do was to assemble the Deputies of the people of Sondrio, Bormio, and Chiavenna, and to concert with them for the tranquillity of their country. The Grisons wasted their time in considering the question; and when the Valtelline Deputies came to Bonaparte at Passariano with their vote in favour of joining the Cisalpine Republic, about the 10th October 1797, he decreed that they might do so, and the Cisalpine Republic on the 22nd October agreed to the union.<sup>1</sup> On the 4th October Bonaparte wrote to Murat, 'I have received your report from Edolo. I am satisfied with what you have done in the Valtelline.' In some way or other Murat had got back to Brescia and to his love, for on the 5th October he was inspecting cavalry there;<sup>2</sup> the young Brescians were anxious to join, shouting: 'We wish to follow you; we want to defend with you our country and Liberty.' On the day before, however, Bonaparte had once more ordered him away from Brescia, to Treviso, where he was to command the 3rd brigade of the 1st cavalry division, under Dugua. A little later, on the 21st October, he was called to Milan to command the 1st Hussars, an appointment apparently made to bring him to head-quarters; and then, as we have seen, he was sent on to Rastadt ahead of Bonaparte, afterwards accompanying him from there to Paris. I give these details to show how short his disgrace must have been, if indeed any disgrace there were, a point which most writers about Murat seem to have on the brain. The only sign of his being discontented is in December 1796, as I have already explained.<sup>3</sup> Once he had

<sup>1</sup> *Corr. Nap.* iii, Nos. 2171-2, 2352; xxix. 284-8; Guiot, *La Réunion des Grisons à la Suisse*, Genève, Georg et Cie, Paris, Alcan, 1899, xxxi-v; Jomini, *Rev.* x. 263-6; Thoumas, *Grands Cav.* i. 277-8, 394-6; Colbert, i. 74-9; Chavanon-Saint-Yves, *Murat*, 28-30.

<sup>2</sup> Trolard, *Montenotte*, 190. The letter in Murat, *Lettres*, i. 19, wrongly dated 18th September 1779, is probably of 1797, and looks as if he had soon returned to Brescia.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 122-3.

been promoted General of Brigade he could not officially have been kept at head-quarters, but all the mentions of him are only consistent with his being marked for employment, that is, in favour.

Another General of Brigade, Lannes, only officially promoted to that rank on the 17th March 1797, also had several missions. We saw him last in Venice in command of the 2nd brigade of the 6th division under Baraguey d'Hilliers; but on the 8th September he was placed in command of a movable column, two infantry regiments and two squadrons of Dragoons, with which he was sent back to be in Tortona by the 12th September, ready to act in Genoa, where the people had risen again. The rough, coarse-tongued Lannes must have come into conflict with the French Minister in Genoa, Faipoult, for on the 20th September Bonaparte told Faipoult that he had received the answer given him by Lannes: 'He is wrong-headed, but a good brave lad. I am writing to instruct him that he should conduct himself with more civility and consideration towards a Minister of the Republic, especially when it happens that the Minister is ten times right,' which shows that Bonaparte was beginning his policy of keeping his officers under the civil power. On the 12th September Lannes was ordered on Nice, if he could be spared from Genoa. He does not seem to have entered Genoa, for Napoleon declares that no French battalion passed Tortona, but he was sent on through Nice to Marseilles, where a Jacobin reaction was taking place. In his own rough style he announced: 'Royalists, I arrive to-day: to-morrow you are dead;' and General Bon, who commanded there, reported that his troops had had a good effect and that Lannes was marching on Manosque;<sup>1</sup> but he is said to have grown disgusted with the work of terrorizing the Royalists, and anyhow, on the 7th October, before Bon had written, Bonaparte had recalled Lannes' column, he himself being ordered to post to Mantua. We have seen him accompanying Bonaparte to Rastadt. It will be more convenient to place here an incident that properly should be described when Bonaparte, and probably Lannes, had gone to Paris. On the 6th February 1798 Bonaparte received from the Minister for War, Schérer, a flag which the *Corps Législatif* presented to him in memory of the battle of Arcola. The same day

<sup>1</sup> North of Marseilles.

he sent this to Lannes, writing, 'The *Corps Législatif*, Citizen-General, gives me a flag in memory of the battle of Arcola. It has wished to honour the army of Italy in the person of its General. There was an instant on the field of Arcola when Victory, uncertain, needed the audacity of leaders to decide her. All bleeding and covered with wounds, you left the ambulance, resolved to conquer or to die. I saw you constantly that day in the first rank of brave men. It is also you who, at the head of the "colonne infernale", arrived first at Dego, and were first over the Po and the Adda. It is for you to be the depositary of this honourable flag, which covers with glory also the grenadiers whom you have constantly commanded. You will only display it when all movement in retreat shall be useless, and victory depends on remaining master of the field of battle.' This flag, long preserved in the family of the Marshal, has disappeared.

As for Suchet, all this time he had remained one of the three Lieut.-Colonels of the fine 18th Regiment, which had so distinguished itself, having on its flag Bonaparte's phrase at Rivoli, 'Je vous connais, l'ennemi ne tiendra pas devant vous'. One would have thought some promotion might have fallen to him, but Colonel Fugières was still at the head of the regiment and there were so many officers *en suite* that advancement was difficult.<sup>1</sup> When the division of Masséna was quartered in Padua in May 1797, Suchet was sent to Venice to get stuff for the clothing of the division, and he passed two pleasant months there. He was quartered in a palace on the Grand Canal, and a gondola and a box at the Opera were placed at his service. 'We soon found ourselves well in connexion with the society of the most considerable persons in the town; we led the life of Princes; and I', says Pelleport, who accompanied Suchet and shared all this, 'had but one hundred francs a month'. The fate of Venice was undecided, and the favour even of a Lieut.-Colonel might be valuable. When the definitive peace had been signed, Bonaparte, on his way from Passariano to Milan, stayed two days with Masséna's division at Padua, passing it in review; and amongst other flattering things telling the men: 'I could not have signed peace in the presence of a finer or more valiant body.' Now, apparently on the 28th October 1797, Suchet got his step.

<sup>1</sup> When Roguet was made Lieut.-Colonel of the 32nd Regiment, there were three Colonels and ten Lieut.-Colonels with it. Roguet, i. 302.



At a large dinner given by some 150 officers of the division, Dupuy, Colonel of the 32nd, being in favour with Bonaparte, went up to him, holding Suchet by the hand, and said: 'Well, General, when will you make our friend Suchet a Colonel?' 'Soon: we will see about it,' replied the Commander-in-Chief. Not put off by this evasive answer, Dupuy took off one of his own epaulettes, and putting it on the unadorned right shoulder of Suchet, said: 'By my almightiness I make thee Colonel.' As Marmont says: 'The buffoonery of this action succeeded, and on leaving the table the real nomination was issued by Berthier.'<sup>1</sup>

Brune, although only a General of Brigade, still, favoured by Bonaparte, had been for some time at the head of a division, for, as we have seen, when Masséna was sent to France in April with the preliminaries of the treaty of Leoben, Brune had taken his place and had brought the division down from Brück to Padua. Then when Augereau finally went to Paris and was appointed to command the Military Division there, Bonaparte gave Brune the command of his division at Verona, where we have seen that he had some trouble over discipline.<sup>2</sup> Bonaparte put in orders on the 16th August: 'General Brune, who is the senior General of Brigade in the army and who has given proofs of military talent and of distinguished courage at the battle of Rivoli, at the combat of Tarvis, and in all the events of the past campaign, is promoted to the rank of General of Division.' This promotion was approved from the 17th August. Brune seems really to have fought well at Rivoli, but, considering in what sort of warfare he had won his rank of General of Brigade, the appointment seems due to favouritism, for Bonaparte not only wanted the support of the Jacobins but also had a strong *penchant* for tall men like Brune. Perhaps it was the favour shown to Brune and Lannes of which the Generals of 'Italie' complained.<sup>3</sup> Next, on the 11th January 1798, we find Bonaparte writing from Paris instructions for Brune, who was to be sent as ambassador to Naples, the Directory thinking it right to dispatch one already recommended by his military actions. His object was to be to induce the Neapolitans not to occupy Rome, on which Berthier,

<sup>1</sup> Marmont, i. 304-5. Gavard gives the entry as: Lieut.-Colonel, temporary, nominated for a distinguished action, the 28th October 1797. *Fastes*, iii. 564, gives the same date. The promotion, according to Gavard, was confirmed on the 23rd October 1798.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 185.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 185.

then in command in Italy, was about to march; but next day Brune's name was included in the list of Generals forming part of the Armée d'Angleterre, and he soon took command of Masséna's late division and entered Switzerland with it.

General Joubert, whatever he may sometimes have fancied, had always stood high in the favour of Bonaparte, who on the 30th May 1797 wrote to him, 'All the information which reaches me on the discipline of your division, as on the conduct of the officers who command it, is favourable to it: this comes from the example you give them and the vigilance you exercise,' praise which delighted the General and which he published to his troops. When the time came for the army to be broken up, Joubert was to have belonged to the Armée d'Angleterre, and he seems to have gone by himself to France, probably to his own home, some time after the 9th November 1797, when orders were sent to him.<sup>1</sup> Then came a special favour. On the 16th November Bonaparte wrote to the Directory, sending back to them the flag presented to the Armée d'Italie. Colonel Andréossi, who started with it, was to take it to Joubert at Macon, first asking for him on his way at Chambéry and at Lyons in case the General were returning to Italy. The flag was to be presented by both officers to the Directors. 'General Joubert,' said Bonaparte, 'who commanded at the battle of Rivoli, has received from Nature the qualities which distinguish warriors. Grenadier in courage, he is General in self-possession and military talents. He has often found himself in circumstances where the knowledge and abilities of a man have much influence on his success. It is of him that it was said before the 18th Fructidor: "This man still lives."<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding several wounds and a thousand dangers, he has escaped the perils of war. He will live long, I hope, for the glory of our arms, the triumph of the Constitution of the Year III, and the happiness of his friends.' Joubert was received by the Directory and was given the command of the French troops in Holland.

Bernadotte must be dealt with at rather greater length. His proceedings at Paris, where he had been sent in August 1797 by Bonaparte to observe events, form part of my account of Fructidor, but he is rather difficult to follow. Bonaparte believed

<sup>1</sup> *Corr. Nap.* iii, No. 2332; but he may have left before.

<sup>2</sup> When surrounded in the Tyrol in March 1797.

he had accepted the command of the Armée du Midi, a shadowy body in the south of France, consisting of the 8th, 9th, 10th, and 20th Military Divisions and only intended to put down local disturbances;<sup>1</sup> while Sciout describes him as succeeding Lannes at Marseilles but, like that officer, getting sick of terrorizing the Royalists there. On the 27th September, however, we find him writing to Bonaparte from Paris that he had refused the command. He had heard that Bonaparte intended to break up his division in 'Italie': 'I cannot believe it, because you promised me the opposite before my departure from Milan; besides, you know, General, that it is my military family and I hold to it. . . . In eleven days I shall be with you; that is to say, as soon as my letter.' In all probability, therefore, he never went to the south of France, but went back to 'Italie' when he left Paris, visiting the armies of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' and 'Rhin-et-Moselle' on the way, as he announced on the 10th September, and rejoining Bonaparte at Passariano, where he found Desaix, and where his influence was in favour of peace. About two days before the treaty was signed Bernadotte left, returning to his division at Udine, through which Bonaparte passed on his way to Milan. Soon came the first sign of opposition to Bonaparte. The formation of the Armée d'Angleterre was breaking up the divisions of 'Italie', and Bernadotte, finding his command would be much reduced, took offence, and on the 28th November wrote to the Directory asking for a command in the Mauritius, the Île de Bourbon or Réunion, India, or the Ionian Islands, or if that were not possible, to be sent to Portugal—I suppose for the expedition suggested for Augereau—otherwise to be allowed to retire. He sent a copy of this letter to Bonaparte, with another one of a defiant nature, requesting that if he himself were allowed to retire, Bonaparte should employ with the Armée d'Angleterre his two A.D.C.s, Villatte and Maurin.<sup>2</sup> 'Ils pourront, comme moi, s'incliner devant les talens, mais jamais devant l'audace. Quoique j'aie à me plaindre de vous, je m'en séparerai sans cesser d'avoir pour vos talens la plus grande estime.' The offensive tone of this letter is extraordinary, especially considering that

<sup>1</sup> Dry, *Soldats ambassadeurs*, ii. 347-8.

<sup>2</sup> Général Baron Eugène-Casimir Villatte (1770-1834); Baron d'Outremont, 1808. Fought in Spain, &c. *Fastes*, iv. 32-3. Général Baron Antoine Maurin (1771-1830); *Fastes*, iii. 386-7.



but three months before he had been assuring Bonaparte of his unvarying friendship and informing him that all the Republicans pressed his image to their hearts.<sup>1</sup> Meantime Bernadotte had gone to Paris again, and he poured out his woes to the sympathizing Barras, making much use of his favourite oath: 'Dieu vivant!' He had not been properly treated by Bonaparte from the first; he, Bernadotte, had not been Republican enough for 'Italie;' he had only received 2,000 livres from Bonaparte as a 'gratification', and what was that now to him? Though once he would have been the happiest of men with 4,000, now it took him 2,000 to live for a year! A curious proof of how the ideas of the Generals had enlarged—in Italy, be it understood. He wanted to retire, while asserting that he had twenty campaigns ready in his belly for the service of the Directory. Then, pacified by Barras, he rejoined his division in Italy. On the 18th December we find Bonaparte writing to him from Paris in the most friendly terms, but as if in answer to some complaint, telling him that he was assured by the Directory that they would seize every opportunity of doing what suited him, and that they had decided they would leave to him the choice of taking the command of the Ionian Islands or of a division of the new Armée d'Angleterre, reinforced by troops he had had in the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', or even of a territorial division, the 17th (Paris) for example. 'No one values more highly than I do the purity of your principles, the loyalty of your character, and the military talents you have developed during the time we have served together. You would be unjust if you doubted this for an instant. In all circumstances I shall count on your esteem and your friendship.' The same day Barras formally wrote to him offering him the Ionian command if a division of the Armée d'Angleterre did not suit him.

It is not easy to understand the next changes in the fortunes of Bernadotte. He accepted the Ionian command, and he sent Bonaparte information about those islands, but the Directory intended to give him the command in Italy. On the 6th January 1798 Bonaparte wrote to him from Paris thanking him for the information about the Ionian command, and saying he passed the time he could not spend on the field of battle in instructing himself. He had wished to have Bernadotte with him in the

<sup>1</sup> p. 289.

Armée d'Angleterre, but it seemed that the Directory thought his presence was necessary in Italy, to command there. 'Believe that, in all circumstances, I shall give you proofs of the esteem with which you have inspired me.' Then came the news of the riot at Rome (where Joseph Bonaparte was French Minister), in which General Duphot was killed; and Berthier, still in Italy, was ordered to march on Rome. Apparently as a compensation, Bernadotte was appointed 'ambassadeur extraordinaire' to Naples, and Berthier was to keep him informed of his march on Rome, as it was feared that the Neapolitan troops might occupy that city. This Bernadotte declined, and he went to Milan, believing he was to succeed Berthier in command of 'Italie', at least when Rome had been occupied. When, however, he met Berthier at Milan, he found that on the 11th January 1798 he had been appointed ambassador to Vienna. Of course he declined this too, preferring the military command, and Leclerc, the Chief of the Staff to 'Italie', writing to Bonaparte on the 24th January, says this, adding that it would be a good choice and that he himself would remain with him with pleasure. Berthier, however, pressed on Bernadotte the importance of the mission: to reassure the Austrian Court on the expedition to Rome; if Bernadotte did not go, he himself would have to halt the expedition and await further instructions. Bernadotte unwillingly gave way.<sup>1</sup> Barras asserts that Bonaparte, not wishing to see Bernadotte in command in Italy, at first had run down his talents, saying he was only fit to lead a division; then, finding the appointment was about to be made, he swerved round and tried another plan, and, while still asserting that his command in Italy would be a real danger for Italy and for France, he lauded the General's diplomatic abilities and thus induced the Directory to send him to Vienna. If this be true, there is no reason to suppose that Bonaparte acted in bad faith. He was anxious for peace, and it was important to have a good man at Vienna: indeed, we shall find the news of an alleged insult to the French flag there making him stop the preparations for Egypt. The work to be done in Italy was for Berthier. The instructions of the Directory for Bernadotte did not represent Bonaparte's ideas. Later, he regretted the selection: 'Ce choix

<sup>1</sup> Dry, *Soldats ambassadeurs*, ii. 355-8; Masson, *Diplomates de la Révolution*, Paris, Perrin et Cie, n.d., p. 150; *Fastes*, i. 342.

était mauvais ; le caractère de ce général était trop exalté ; sa tête n'était pas assez calme.' Anyhow, Bernadotte started for Vienna on the 28th January 1798, thus severing for ever his connexion with Italy.

It is interesting to consider how greatly the Armée d'Italie differed from the other armies of the Republic, both as a fighting force and as a school for Marshals. True that it was not a perfectly homogeneous force. It had received frequent reinforcements, and if the troops which came by driblets were soon absorbed in it, the regiments which arrived at the end of 1796 from the Rhine armies, especially those from the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', formed into a separate division under Bernadotte, never quite merged into complete combination with the rest of the army. Still, the whole army was overshadowed by one master mind. Bonaparte found it trained and organized by such men as Kellermann and Schérer, with capital lieutenants, Masséna, Augereau, and Sérurier: the sharp weapon was ready to his hand. His successes followed so rapidly on his assumption of command, that before the Generals could grumble at their ridiculous supersession by a lad, successful only in a street riot at Paris, the army was over the mountains and its commander was clothed with all the power and prestige of victory. What was more, Bonaparte soon had his treasure chest full. This position of the Armée d'Italie as the paymaster of the Directory is often too lightly passed over. While other commanders were begging for funds from the Government to enable them to move; while Moreau did not like to visit part of his army till some pay was issued,<sup>1</sup> Bonaparte was distributing cash to his troops, to the Directory at Paris, and to his rivals on the Rhine. Thus in March 1797 he sent a million francs to the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' and the same amount to the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'. The troops sent him by Kellermann from the Armée des Alpes had their expenses paid. He estimated the sums he had supplied by September 1797 at from forty to fifty million francs, besides which he had maintained and paid his own army.

It is true that he reached command when the wicked system of the *Représentants en mission*, or the *Commissaires aux armées*, was ended, but his arbitrary and trenchant spirit would never have borne the Revolutionary curb. Dumouriez and Custine in

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Cyr, *Rhin-et-Moselle*, iv. 194, 320.



earlier days had broken their teeth in vain against the administration, but they had not been borne on the tide of glory and of gold which carried Bonaparte over all obstructions, and which made him complete master of his army. Even in 1797 his troops called his head-quarters at Milan, 'The Court of Milan'. This army also warred without the visible support that the armies on the Rhine frontier lent to one another. It advanced relying on its own strength;<sup>1</sup> and even if its General complained of his abandonment by the other armies, yet its fortunes remained unchanged, its commander negotiated much as he pleased, and General Bonaparte knew, what the Emperor Napoleon forgot, the art of where to stop. We have seen how in 1797, much to their disgust, the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' and the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' were halted in their advance into Germany by the armistice concluded in Italy.<sup>2</sup> The masterful spirit of Bonaparte was shown in every act in connexion with the army. Jourdan commanded the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' from its first formation in 1794 to the end of 1796, yet it would be difficult to find one word of his implying any proprietorship in the force which he had led so long. Bonaparte treated the troops under him in very different style. He distributed swords on the same principle as he did, later, arms of honour, and later still the cross of the Legion of Honour, to those whom he wished to distinguish.<sup>3</sup> He ordered stirring sentences to be inscribed on the standards of remarkable regiments, just as if he were already sovereign of France. His men thought all this natural enough. Fighting for itself, paying for itself, and for the other forces, the Armée d'Italie was a law unto itself. As Madame de Staël put it: 'L'armée du Rhin était celle de la République française. L'armée d'Italie était celle de Bonaparte.'

The explanation of its lack of organization, noted by Desaix and others, was that the Armée d'Italie was practically the last born of all the great armies. Its real history began in 1796 when Bonaparte came to command it. Long before that time the

<sup>1</sup> The Armée des Alpes after 1795 only sent reinforcements to 'Italie', and did not act itself.

<sup>2</sup> Phipps, ii. 432-3.

<sup>3</sup> The first arms were given in the name of the Directory, apparently without any authority, see *Corr. Nap.* iii, No. 2127 (28th August 1797), when ninety sabres for the infantry and ten for the cavalry were ordered to be made, of Damascus steel, for outstanding deeds.

other great armies had made several active campaigns, and had advanced far from their original ground, while 'Italie' was still close to its first posts. Also it often drew its supplies by the sea. It consequently had not had time to feel the necessity for organizations without which the other forces could not have existed. When it did move, it was in such a fat country that matters of supply had not been cared for as much as in poorer but more comfortable Germany; also its very successes carried it always into fresh districts, not already worn by war as the country by the Rhine was. True as all this is, the Armée d'Italie was far from dreaming that it was inferior in any way to its rivals. Enriched by its conquests, it was intoxicated with the draughts of glory it had drunk. Officers promoted from it persisted in remaining in its ranks, trusting to the guns of the enemy to maintain the due proportion of each rank. Bonaparte had to form three companies of 'officiers auxiliaires' for each division, in addition to four extra officers placed with each company. The men themselves looked with grudging eyes on the arrival of the reinforcements they needed so sorely, as bringing so many more to share in the glory and the booty they considered their own property. To add a touch of the ludicrous: when Bonaparte announced that the French soldier carried in one hand the bayonet as a sure guarantee of victory, he perhaps forgot the difficulty he had in preventing his men losing their guarantee. He had to attach a special pecuniary penalty for this neglect of their arms.<sup>1</sup>

It would be curious to trace the influence which the Armée d'Italie had on Bonaparte and his Generals. In the case of Masséna, for example, we can see that the campaigns of 1796-7, with their short bursts of war followed by periods of inactivity, were well suited to his character, which was at its best only under great strain. As for Bonaparte, the extraordinary endurance of his men perhaps made him expect too much from his later armies, which did not consist of such good material. Had his armies of 1813 been capable of anything like the feats of fighting, marching, and again fighting, performed by the Armée d'Italie, he would have dealt in fine style with the strategy of the Allies. He himself never forgot his past. If in

<sup>1</sup> *Corr. Nap.* ii, Nos. 1311, 1424. The same thing occurred in Egypt; *Corr. Nap.* v, No. 3645.

later years he shocked the Austrian courtiers by speaking of Marie Antoinette as 'my late Aunt', he also horrified them by talking of 'the time when I was in the regiment of La Fère': the Queen of Spain might as well have mentioned her legs. In the correspondence of the Emperor Napoleon one often hears Captain Bonaparte or the commander of the Armée d'Italie speaking. When in 1803 he objected to changes in the uniform of officers on the ground of the expense they would be put to, we obviously hear the regimental officer, as we do also in his dislike of the purposeless changes of position so dear to staff officers. Also the memory of the Emperor ought to be dear to regimental officers for his attitude to the Departments which hang round the neck of every army: shooting some commissariat officers was ever the simple means he recommended in cases of difficulty. Picton, of happy memory, saw the propriety of this proceeding, but unfortunately he had not the power of the Emperor.<sup>1</sup> Another amusing thing in the *Correspondance* is the way in which Napoleon never forgot the grievances he had had when in command in Italy. Emperor and King, with all the reins of Government in his hands, he was as firmly convinced that all stores and reinforcements were diverted from his own immediate command, as when his time was divided between urging his barefooted, half-clothed troops to limp on to victory and complaining to the Directory of their destitution and abandonment.

Some writers have drawn this contrast between the school of the armies on the Rhine and that of the army of Italy: the Rhine Generals, they say, advanced with caution, watching their flanks, assuring their rear, never exposing themselves to the risk of the Caudine forks, while the Generals of the Armée d'Italie were less prudent, not always thinking of their line of operations, but trusting more to brilliant strokes. How many times, asks Lamarque, have not Masséna and Augereau recalled Victory, when the first operations had made her abandon our ensigns.<sup>2</sup> This sounds well, but, if space permitted, it might

<sup>1</sup> I believe the anecdote about Picton's threat of hanging a commissariat officer can be traced back as attributed to Generals of each age until a Greek commander is reached. Each instance is probably true, for there is much human nature amongst Generals.

<sup>2</sup> *Mémoires du Général Lamarque*, 3 vols., Paris, Fournier, 1835-6. See vol. iii, pp. 35-56.



easily be disproved. It is significant that General Lamarque, while naming some of these cautious Generals, does not include the two chief leaders of the armies on the Rhine, Jourdan and Moreau. Who can say that Masséna, daring as he was, was bolder than the worthy Jourdan—and one would like to have heard the opinion of Sainte-Suzanne, mentioned by Lamarque, on the caution of Moreau. As for Bonaparte, whatever ill-informed writers may say, he was ever most careful of his communications and of his base. It is, however, quite permissible to believe with Thiébault that the peculiarities of the theatre of war in Italy gave better openings to a General able to plan strokes at detached bodies, than the broader area in Germany, each inch of which might be fought over. This may have been a great advantage to the first efforts of Bonaparte, who might not have won his way to the front so rapidly in more regular operations.

One noticeable thing in all these campaigns of Bonaparte in Italy is the little we hear of the part played by the artillery. An exception is at Castiglione, where the plain offered a good field for the Horse Artillery of Marmont, and where Graham says that 'a very formidable artillery fire was brought to bear against the little height where the Marshal' (Wurmser) 'had collected twelve or fourteen pieces of cannon'. As this was 'on a small height commanding the plain, and about a mile from Castiglione', the French artillery in question must have been that of Masséna. Graham also states that the French had more than double the number of guns of the Austrians at this battle, most of the latter's being captured. At Rivoli the French had the advantage of being able to bring up their field batteries, and we know that four of their light pieces flanked the right of the Austrians in their last struggle to emerge from the valley of the Adige. According to Berthier, Provera got across the Adige under cover of his batteries, and no doubt guns were much used on both sides wherever possible; but the nature of the fighting did not make this happen often, except in the plains. Unfortunately the only memoirs of artillery officers which I have for this campaign, those of Bonaparte and Marmont, are of men not actually with guns: one wishes that, say, Boulart had come here earlier than 1798.

To sum up the influence of the *Armée d'Italie* as far as

the Marshals were concerned, we have nine future Marshals, Augereau, Bessières, Lannes, Marmont, Masséna, Murat, Sérurier, Suchet, and Victor, who certainly got the chief part of their training here. To these we may add Brune, who first learnt war with this army, and Berthier, who, though he came here as a formed officer, can hardly be separated from Bonaparte. Lastly, Bernadotte, although he considered himself apart from this army, still had experience of Bonaparte's handling of troops. Excluding Bernadotte, we get the large number of eleven Marshals furnished by the Armée d'Italie. The 'Sambre-et-Meuse' furnished six: Jourdan, Lefebvre, Bernadotte, Ney, Mortier, and Soult. The 'Rhin-et-Moselle' furnished three: Davout, Oudinot, and Saint-Cyr. The 'Nord', the two armies of the Pyrenees, and La Vendée each only gave one: Macdonald, Pérignon, Moncey, and Grouchy respectively. The list of the Armée d'Italie is a brilliant one, and it would have been increased by the addition of Joubert had that General lived. The early deaths of Joubert and Lannes, and the premature physical decay of Masséna and Sérurier, deprived the school of this army of much of the brilliance it would otherwise have carried throughout the Empire. Still, allowing for all this, one must confess to a certain disappointment with the results of the careers of these Marshals. I cannot explain the reason, but to me these lists of 'Italie' seem dull. Possibly in following the blazing track of Bonaparte one unconsciously slights the labours of the chiefs of the army, great, very great, though their exertions were. It is perhaps only when one reads of the failure of any one regiment that the full merit of others is realized.

How much of the game of war did Bonaparte's lieutenants learn from him in Italy? Nothing as far as Augereau was concerned: he remained the same soldierly braggart, good on the actual field, but useless elsewhere. Joubert, so trusted by Bonaparte, also learnt nothing, as his strange hesitation on the day before Novi was to show: longing to strike, seeing the necessity for withdrawal, but unable to change his plans. Victor was to serve again under Bonaparte, but to the end he remained only a stout fighter, able to lead a division or even a corps, but nothing higher. Marmont was to have a still longer tutelage, and to carry his confident and ready spirit into Spain, where the shot which disabled him prevents us from judging his merits

fairly. For Lannes, we must take the high esteem in which Bonaparte held him as justified, although its foundation is hard to understand, for he seems to have been only a corps leader, with faults of temper which might have been fatal in high command. Murat was, or became, a fine cavalry leader, with a good eye for the battle-field; his bad qualities—waste of men and horses—came from lack of regimental experience. Berthier left the army as he came to it, except that his dreams of independent command for himself had vanished and he felt helpless when away from his chief. Bessières rose to command a corps, without giving signs of any genius, and Junot was a mere 'sabreur', useless in command. Suchet's rapid spring on the Austrians after Marengo, the moment they released their pressure on him on the Var, seems to be a remembrance of Bonaparte. (Unfortunately the jealousy or fatigue of Masséna caused Suchet's blow to fail.) He also showed great powers of administration, a quality not to be much expected from this school. After these we come to a rapid decline in generalship. Brune had his victory over the Duke of York in 1799, but he showed his weakness when entrusted with the army of Italy in 1800-1. Ill health told on Sérurier, who never recovered from the effects of his exposure to the fevers of the marshes round Mantua during the blockade. Perhaps it was that experience which always made Napoleon careful in later years of placing troops in marshy districts, and which led him to prophesy at his ease the disaster to the English Walcheren expedition in 1809. Still, Sérurier never had an opportunity of showing real powers of command, good as he was at the head of a division. Masséna alone showed signs of having learnt from Bonaparte. A fine and resolute commander, his double stroke from Zurich in 1799, first against the Austrians and Russians, and then against Suvóroff in rear, reminds one of Bonaparte's wonderful blows at the detached columns of the Austrians round the Italian lakes. Bonaparte, indeed, would probably have been incapable of the fine patience of Masséna,<sup>1</sup> who disregarded the threats of his Government and the danger from a possible junction of the two bodies of the enemy, till the right moment for his leap was come. Flashes like this take

<sup>1</sup> I refer only to the question of temperament, not of ability. I think the day before Austerlitz is about the only instance of Napoleon displaying patience, and I doubt whether that would have lasted long.



one back to the time when all were young and all went well in Italy.

As for the personal side of the relationship of the 'Italie' Marshals with Bonaparte, how Berthier became his shadow is known to all. His withdrawal in 1814 was so mean that even to Napoleon it became a matter not so much for resentment as for ridicule. Though Bessières became a Marshal, he was in reality almost always commanding the Guard, and so seldom far from the Emperor. Duroc became Grand Maréchal du Palais, a post which he valued more than the *bâton* as it kept him in such close contact with Napoleon. The brave, warm-hearted, half-insane Junot gave much trouble, but he, Bessières, and Duroc, were really attached to Napoleon, and the two latter were men of high character. Amongst all the self-seeking and ingratitude of the Empire it is pleasant to think of the friendship of this small group, dating from the early days of 'Italie', whose faithfulness was only ended by death, if death itself has such a power. The destruction of this group in 1813 was a great blow to Napoleon, not only for himself but for the estimation of posterity. His abandonment by so many in 1814 has made it seem as if no affection for him had ever existed, except amongst the men and officers of the regiments whose blood and bravery had built up his Empire. Junot, Bessières, and Duroc died before disaster tried their gratitude: had they lived, I believe they, with Lannes, would have been found faithful, and Napoleon would not have been left in painful isolation.

PARIS, THE ARMY OF THE INTERIOR, AND  
THE COUP D'ÉTAT OF FRUCTIDOR

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# XI

## PARIS IN WAR TIME (October 1792 to July 1794)

Value of an armed force in revolutions. Formation of the Armée de l'Intérieur. Fall of the Gironde. Thermidor.

### CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

- 1792 23rd October. French soil free from invaders.  
6th November. Victory of Jemappes.
- 1793 February to March. France declares war on England, Holland, and Spain.  
22nd March. The Empire declares war on France.  
March to April. Defeats and treason of Dumouriez.  
April to May. Successes of the Vendéans.  
May to July. Defeats on the Spanish frontier and on the Rhine.  
27th September. Revolt of Toulon.  
October to May 1794. French victories on all frontiers.
- 1794 1st June. Lord Howe's victory at sea.  
June to July. Victories of newly formed 'Sambre-et-Meuse'.

So far I have dealt with the history of the armies on the frontier, but something must be said about Paris, not only because the head-quarters of the Armée de l'Intérieur were fixed there, but also because many of the events there affected the fighting armies; whilst it is interesting to note the actual or possible meetings of Generals there, hard though it be to make sure of them. Indeed a history of the forces in and around Paris, from the first stirrings of the Revolutionary movement until the beginning of the Consulate, would be an interesting and valuable one to write, and one from which many a lesson might be learnt. A foolish use is often made of the truism that you cannot sit on bayonets, for whilst bayonets may not be able to prevent for long the flow of any great movement in a nation, still, they can do much to influence its course. Had Charles I, and not Cromwell, first understood the value of trained troops, and had the red-coated Ironsides fought for the King and not for the Parliament, then, though the growth of constitutional government would probably still have taken place, it would have been much slower, and the whole chapter of the Commonwealth would have to be erased from the history of England. In France the Revolution



might have been the gradual passage from the autocracy of the Sovereign into some sort of constitutional government, had Louis XVI not allowed himself to be stripped of his armed force. The Revolutionary party were far-seeing enough to aim at getting all the troops away from Paris, and they had the force collected round the Capital under Besenval dispersed. Still, had the King kept his Constitutional Guard,—possibly, even, had he not interfered with the defence of the Tuileries by the Swiss Guard, the small body of ‘patriots’ who really dared to fight would have been broken up. The *Journal d'un Garde Suisse*<sup>1</sup> gives a good idea of how little formidable the men from Marseilles were, and of how the defence of the Tuileries was mismanaged. The Swiss, interrupted in their meal on the morning of the 9th August, got no food afterwards; but, when they did fight, they drove off the mob and took their guns, until their own ammunition failed and they had to withdraw into the Palace. It is to be remarked that the citizens of Paris are not represented as having any animosity towards the Swiss; indeed, the survivor who tells the story was saved by one of the people. The King could not even attempt to give any heart to the men ready to defend him. Passing before the National Guard, drawn up in the court of the Tuileries, he only said a few words which they could not hear. ‘Sa tranquillité froide et apathique faisait mal à voir dans une si terrible position’, says Lavalette, who was one of them; and the Queen declared that all was lost, the King had shown no energy, and that this sort of review had done more harm than good. Well might one of the Royalists declare: ‘C’est un Roy sans caractère et sans courage; il ne lui arrive rien qu’il ne mérite.’<sup>2</sup>

The proper way of dealing with the mob of Paris was seen early enough. When on the 25th May 1793 the Commune sent a deputation to summon the Convention to release Hébert, whom they had arrested: ‘Listen’, replied the President, Isnard, one of the Girondins, ‘to what I am about to say. If ever, by one of those insurrections which since the 10th March have been renewed unceasingly, it happens that a blow is delivered at the National Representation, I declare to you in the name of the

<sup>1</sup> *Revue de Paris*, 15th September, 1st October 1908.

<sup>2</sup> Chevalier de Marnac, in Pierre de Vaissière's *Lettres d'aristocrates*, Perrin, 1907, see p. 541.

whole of France that Paris will be annihilated. . . . Remember that the sword of the law, from which still drops the blood of the tyrant, is ready to strike down whoever wishes to rival in power the National Convention.'<sup>1</sup> Danton tried to get this threat disavowed, but the Assembly approved it by a formal vote. Isnard soon nearly lost his head for this speech, but, however illogical it was for his party to deprecate riots, he was right, if only he had had the necessary force to prevent the Assembly being overawed. The Jacobins and the 'patriots' understood this point much better, and, having stripped the Monarchy of its defenders, a mere show of force was often sufficient to get the Assemblies, and later the Councils, to obey them. It is one of the proofs of the inefficiency of Robespierre that he never realized the necessity for having force on his side. It was the same all over France, for throughout the Revolutionary period a very large armed force was retained in the Interior to overawe the nation. Of course, all through this period nothing is so lamentable as the conduct of the so-called 'hônnetes gens', but some allowance must be made for the fact that the 'patriots' had seized the armed force, much helped as they were by the flight of the nobles. The manner in which the nobles fought in the armies of the Princes and of Condé, and the peasants in La Vendée, showed there was no want of personal bravery amongst the Royalists, but they had let the Jacobins snatch the sword of France from their hands.

Bonaparte was to show at Vendémiaire how easily an attack on the Government might have been repulsed, and his enemy then, the Sections, was far more dangerous than the rabble from Marseilles. The violence and the success of the Jacobins have obscured the existence of the great body of opinion opposed to them and, especially at first, favourable to the King. On the morning of the attack on the Tuileries, the 2nd August 1792, we shall find the wife of Camille Desmoulins, one of the 'patriot' leaders, insulted in the streets by the cries of women that her husband was the cause of all the troubles, whilst that evening Danton, Fréron, and Brune withdrew alarmed from the streets. Without the existence of an armed force, all Governments must

<sup>1</sup> Eugene Welvert, *La Conversion d'un Conventionnel: Mathurin Isnard*, *Revue des deux mondes*, 15th December 1903; Aulard, *Hist. polit. de la Rév. française*, 435-6.

be unstable. Under the Consulate, when many Generals were eager to upset Bonaparte, and urged Masséna to bell the cat, that sensible man objected that, did he move, he would be taken out and shot. He was right. The Guides, not to say the other troops also, would have obeyed Bonaparte, who certainly would have struck. Had a benevolent, spineless man been ruler, then his Government would have lasted but a few months. This applies more particularly to Paris, but all over France the Republic for long probably had as many enemies as real friends; witness the struggle not only in La Vendée but also at Lyons, Marseilles, and Toulon.<sup>1</sup> Whether more energy and combination on the part of the so-called Royalists might have brought the Republic down or not, still, the insurrections, and the dread of them, neutralized a large part of the forces which otherwise might have been employed on the frontiers. More might have been done to assist this by the Allies, and it is extraordinary that they permitted the garrisons of Mayence and Valenciennes to be used against the forces really fighting their battle in the Interior.<sup>2</sup> Their information of the state of affairs in France was capital: it would be difficult even now to improve on the résumé given to Earl Gower in January 1794 by a correspondent in France.<sup>3</sup> What hopes they had from risings in France can be seen in the Memoirs of Wickham. This state of affairs made it necessary for the Republic to have, besides the ring of armies along the frontiers and the coast, a regular army for the Interior, and I have to describe that force, first mentioning an army formed for a different purpose which otherwise might be mixed up with it.

The first Armée de Réserve or Armée de l'Intérieur, formed at Châlons in September 1792, had nothing to do with internal matters, but was simply a depot for the armies of the 'Nord' and 'Centre', who were trying to check the advance of Brunswick, and I have already alluded to it.<sup>4</sup> It was a mass of *Fédérés* and other untrained and mutinous troops, most dangerous to its commanders. Marshal Luckner came here from Metz in the first days of September 1792, to command as Generalissimo of the armies of the 'Nord', 'Centre', and 'Rhin'. Labourdonnaie, left by Dumouriez at Valenciennes when he marched south

<sup>1</sup> Phipps, iii, Chapters VI and VII.

<sup>3</sup> *The Despatches of Earl Gower*, 314-40.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 20-1.

<sup>4</sup> Phipps, i. 123.



for Valmy, came to Châlons to replace Luckner about the 9th September 1792, but he found such an unruly mob that he did not try really to organize it, contenting himself with sending what reinforcements he could to Dumouriez in the Argonne. He was in fear of his own life from his men, and when about the middle of September he went to command the 'Nord', in despair he suggested that Santerre, the Paris brewer, should be sent to Châlons as the last hope of reducing the men to obedience. Lieut.-General de Sparre succeeded Labourdonnaie, but he soon became disgusted and hopeless; and this so-called 'army' was broken up after Valmy, when Dumouriez dispersed all the force which had been in and near the Argonne. Its strength then was 9,129, all volunteers with the exception of one battalion of regulars, much praised by de Sparre for the example they gave. The General himself seems to have retired.

The Armée de l'Intérieur with which we have to deal, a force intended to act against internal enemies, was decreed on the 1st October 1792, under Berruyer,<sup>1</sup> with the 17th (Paris), 22nd, and 21st Military Divisions as its district, that is, all the Divisions not allotted to the frontier or coast armies; the 18th Division was added on the 1st March 1793. As I have told elsewhere,<sup>2</sup> Berruyer was sent on the 23rd March 1793, with such troops and officers as he could get, to command on the left of the Loire against the Vendéans, and he took with him Berthier, who may then have belonged to this army, which was but a small force consisting of the depots of some regiments. A decree of the 30th April 1793 ordered the formation of two Armées de Réserve de l'Intérieur, but I can only trace this one army. Berruyer had been recalled from La Vendée in disgrace two days before, and he was suspended on the 1st June 1793, but was again sent to La Vendée. This army existed until Brumaire and the Consulate, being of interest to us only at certain periods during that time. In September 1795 its district was extended to Rouen, Havre, and Dieppe, that is, I take it, the 15th Military Division, formerly belonging to the Armée des Côtes de Cherbourg. To give an idea of the waste of men caused by this army of occupation, on the 5th September 1797 its strength,

<sup>1</sup> Général Jean-François Berruyer (1737-1804), Governor of the Invalides, 1796-1804; *Fastes*, iii. 84-5; Michaud, *Biog. Univ.* iv. 342-3.

<sup>2</sup> Phipps, iii. 9.

including the Paris force, was 120,392 men, besides 7,000 occupying Dijon, Lyons, and Marseilles, but belonging to the active armies.<sup>1</sup> As this 'army' really was but so many troops spread over France, never acting in a body, and only crystallizing, so to speak, at Paris for any *coup d'état*, we need not attempt to follow its history. If we treat it as synonymous with the 17th Military Division, we get the following men with whom we are concerned as actually belonging to it, all, however, except Brune, only doing so for a short time: Berthier, Brune, Murat, Pichegru, Joubert, Bonaparte, and his A.D.C.s, Junot and Marmont. I now give an account of the connexion of the future Marshals with this army—or rather with Paris—and a short description of the various *émeutes* and *coups d'état* which occurred in the Capital. I fear some of the pages giving the arrivals and departures of the future Marshals may seem dull, but they serve to fill up what otherwise would be gaps in the histories of these men, and often they will suggest curious meetings.<sup>2</sup>

Berthier, Brune, Hoche, Lefebvre, Saint-Cyr, and to some extent Dumouriez, all were in Paris during the early stages of the Revolution, Berthier being on the side of the Monarchy, Hoche and Lefebvre sympathizing with the Revolution but ready to enforce order against mob-law, and Brune a Dantonist, belonging to the violent party of the 'patriots'. Saint-Cyr most likely was a passive and disgusted spectator of the excesses of the mob.<sup>3</sup> On the 14th July 1789, when the Bastille was taken, Lieut.-Colonel Berthier was Chief of the Staff to the force which had been collected under Paris, which was broken up. Brune probably was amongst the assailants; but, though some of the *Gardes Françaises* were with the mob, Sergeant Lefebvre and Corporal Hoche, members of that body, were maintaining order in their quarters. On the 5th and 6th October 1789, when the mob marched on Versailles and brought the Royal Family to Paris, Berthier was in command of the National Guard at Ver-

<sup>1</sup> Pierre, *Fructidor*, 73-4. I do not include the troops at Cambrai, Soissons, and Château-Thierry, as they were only temporarily detached by Hoche from the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'.

<sup>2</sup> For further details of the various Generals mentioned, reference should be made to Phipps, i, ii, and iii. (E.A.S.)

<sup>3</sup> See Phipps, i, Introduction, Chapter IV, for the political views of the future Marshals.

sailles, and amongst his men may have been the promoted Lieutenant Lefebvre. Hoche, now Sergeant in the same body, was one of the small party with which Lafayette secured the personal safety of the King and Queen. Brune, on the other hand, was probably again with the mob. Saint-Cyr, if already a grenadier in the National Guard, probably belonged to one of the well-affected battalions, who either tried to prevent the people leaving Paris, or else, like that of Thiébault, were sent in their pursuit to Versailles.<sup>1</sup>

On the 1st April 1791 Berthier, now Colonel, was attached to the staff of the 17th Military Division. In June came the flight of the King to Varennes, when Berthier, Lieutenant Lefebvre, and Sergeant Hoche, of the National Guard, with Brune certainly, and Saint-Cyr possibly, were in the Capital. In August Brune, as Sergeant-Major of volunteers, went to the eastern frontier; and probably in September Pérignon came as a Deputy to the *Assemblée législative*. At the end of this year Lefebvre went, I think, to the frontier, unless, made Captain on the 1st January 1792, he went in the spring of that year. In February 1792 Murat came as a trooper of the King's Constitutional Guard, then being formed; but next month he rejoined his own regiment, the 12th Chasseurs. In April Bessières came from the south to join this Guard. On the 22nd May Berthier went as Chief of the Staff to the Armée du Nord, and on the 28th of that month Lieutenant<sup>2</sup> Bonaparte came from Corsica, where he had been on leave from his company, stationed at Valence. In this month also Lieutenant Hoche went to join his regiment at Thionville. In June *adjudant-major* Brune was called here from his battalion of the Armée du Rhin. The Constitutional Guard, in which Bessières served, was broken up on the 7th June, but he remained in the Capital. Thus on the 10th August 1792, when the Tuileries were assaulted, the Swiss Guard massacred, and the King suspended, Bessières, *adjudant-major* Brune, Augereau<sup>3</sup> (in the National Guard), Pérignon, a Deputy of the *Assemblée législative*, Saint-Cyr, a civilian, and Bonaparte, were in the Capital. Of these we may take Brune and possibly Augereau as engaged in the assault; Bessières, though claiming later also to

<sup>1</sup> Thiébault, i. 239-45.

<sup>2</sup> His promotion, made in July, was antedated the 6th February 1792.

<sup>3</sup> Phipps, i. 60; iii. 25.



have been engaged, most probably was amongst those favourable to the Monarchy but who did not fight for it. Pérignon must have been a disgusted spectator, as probably was Saint-Cyr. Certainly Lieutenant Bonaparte was. From the 2nd to the 5th September 1792 went on the massacres in the prisons of Paris, and most of the same future Marshals were in the Capital, though possibly Brune was not. Report, however, made him the tall ruffian who paraded the streets carrying the head of the Princesse de Lamballe on a spike. Report also represented her as killed with such revolting cruelty that one can imagine the long hatred which believed itself revenged on Brune in 1815. Anyhow, September saw this group of men scattered. On the 7th September Brune was sent on a commission to obtain supplies from the neighbouring Departments; on the 9th Captain Bonaparte left for Corsica, and Pérignon went south to join the Armée des Pyrénées Orientales, where Bessières also went in October. This left Augereau alone in Paris.

In 1793 we get the arrivals and departures of the following men. On the 1st January Dumouriez arrived from his conquest of Belgium, where he had been commanding all the armies in the North, bringing with him his A.D.C., Colonel Macdonald. Colonel Brune, who is said to have made that campaign, perhaps returned before. Dumouriez hoped to save the life of the King, but Louis XVI was executed on the 21st January 1793, and five days afterwards Dumouriez, leaving Macdonald in Paris, started for his dash into Holland. Lieutenant Murat was in Paris on the 15th February, and again on the 22nd and the 25th April, apparently on regimental business, each visit most likely being for a few days only. Macdonald at last started to join his regiment in the Armée du Nord about the 20th March, and *adjutant-major* Augereau went to La Vendée this month. On the 7th April, when the defection of Dumouriez was known, Colonel Brune was sent to rally the broken troops of the 'Nord' and 'Ardenne'; I presume he returned soon. Captain Hoche, A.D.C. to General Le Veneur, came from the 'Nord' for a short time in April. Kellermann, commanding the 'Alpes', was called up by the Government and arrived about the first week in May, returning to his army at the end of the month. On the 31st May and the 2nd June 1793 came the fall of the Girondins, who, having at one time led the Revolution, had now become too

moderate for such men as Robespierre and Danton. Their fall is worth the study of any one wishing to follow, more minutely than I can do here, the effect of force on the course of the Revolution. It was only a small party which had effected the capture of the Tuileries in August 1792, and now what really was not a strong body made the Convention give up those members who were demanded as victims by the Jacobins. A mass of National Guards had been brought round the Convention, but only part of them were in favour of the Commune of Paris, the directors of the stroke. Still, these were threatening enough, and their commander, Hanriot, placed his guns in action, ready to fire on the Convention. We shall see him do the same thing at Thermidor, but then the Convention was bold enough to overawe his men. Now, however, it yielded, and gave up the Deputies, who on the 31st October went to the scaffold. Brune was the only future Marshal now in the Capital, and, considering his connexion with Danton, we may believe that he was amongst the force of Hanriot. However, in June, before the Girondins died, he went as Chief of the Staff to the force sent by the Convention to meet the body with which General Wimpfen, the commander of the Armée des Côtes de Cherbourg, was marching to deliver the Convention from the tyranny of the mob of Paris. Probably he came back in July. The other revolts, at Marseilles and Toulon, against the 'Rump' of the Convention, were also suppressed, but only, as we have seen, after a severe struggle.<sup>1</sup>

In July 1793 there were many arrivals. Custine, commanding the 'Nord', and Biron, from his command in La Vendée, both arrived about the 19th July, to be slaughtered; going to their death, Custine on the 27th August and Biron on the 31st December. General Davout passed through on his way from the 'Nord' to La Vendée, returning to rejoin the 'Nord' in August, but, perhaps influenced by the imprisonment or the fate of Custine, he went to his home instead. General Berthier came about the 21st July from La Vendée, to report on matters there, but was not allowed to return, and going to Précý-sur-Oise, near Paris, was not again employed till March 1795. One can imagine his feelings about the long list of Generals he knew who were to be executed. Brune, now General of Brigade, went

<sup>1</sup> In Phipps, iii, Chapters VI and VII.

to the 'Nord' on the 20th August and is said to have been present at Hondschoote in September, after which, presumably, he came back; in October he went on the expedition to Bordeaux, which I shall shortly describe. Houchard, removed from command of the 'Nord', entered the prison of the Abbaye on the 27th September, mounting the scaffold on the 16th November. Meanwhile, on the 10th October the Revolutionary Government had been established, and six days later Marie-Antoinette was guillotined. On the 6th November Kellermann, removed from the command of the 'Alpes', entered the Abbaye, probably meeting Houchard there, if not Biron. Then on the 10th November came the Feast of Reason, where Brune's former friend, Momoro, or rather his wife, played a prominent part. Jourdan, commanding the 'Nord', was in Paris in the first fortnight of November, going to the Jacobins on the 11th, and little dreaming that that busy hive would be closed in a few months. Brune came back from Bordeaux after the 19th December, being employed on the *Comité militaire* on the 25th of that month. Finally, General Kilmaine, who had been removed from the command of the 'Nord' on the 16th August, was at last arrested.

I must now deal with the expedition which Brune undertook against Bordeaux in October. Bordeaux had taken sides with the Federalists, had rejected the Representatives dispatched to its district, and had prepared to resist the Convention, although with foolish inconsistency it had at first left its fine volunteer battalions with the Armée des Côtes de la Rochelle, not wishing to seem to sympathize with the Vendéans. Eventually some of the Representatives marched on the town with a force, at the head of which was Brune, formed of some of the troops which had been used in Normandy and some *sans-culottes* of Réole, through which they passed; about 1,800 'paysans et brigands', as a contemporary describes them, but 1,500 infantry and 150 cavalry according to the Representatives. Meanwhile the town had resolved to submit, partly on account of the failure of the opposition in Normandy, partly hoping that a new Constitution would be voted; and on the approach of the troops of the Convention its armed force, in obedience to orders, went out to meet them. Bordeaux had a well-organized and well-equipped body of men, 12,000 strong, who had from the first served in the National Guard, and amongst these were the fine battalions



which had returned from La Vendée on the 4th August 1793, bitterly regretted by the leaders there. The Representatives were furious at their former repulse, and Tallien, after an abusive speech, ordered his men to tear off the oak crowns and the epaulettes and cockades of the 'troupe dorée' of Bordeaux. Then, ordering the disbandment of these troops, he entered the town by a breach in its walls on the 16th October 1793, the day on which Marie-Antoinette went to her death in Paris. Brune with his staff marched at the head of the armed force. This lamblike submission takes away all sympathy from the town, for these armed men must have known what would be their fate. All arms were called in, the town was placed under military law, and an 'Armée Révolutionnaire' was formed of the troops of the Convention, to whom was added a battalion of the *sans-culottes* of Bordeaux; whilst the very name of the Department, the Gironde, was effaced from the map, that of Bec-d'Ambès being substituted. Then the guillotine began to work, martial law only ceasing on the 19th December. Of Brune's personal part in all this we know little, but he was given command of this local 'Armée Révolutionnaire', and so must have shared in its bloody work. One night when a mass of people, mainly of the *bourgeoisie*, were collected in the Grand-Théâtre, Brune and his men were sent to surround the building so that the Representatives could arrest their victims the more easily. Once he nearly lost his life whilst personally arresting one of the former leaders, Bertonneau, who, drawing a pistol, fired point-blank at him, and, missing, then shot himself dead; he did not escape trial by that means, for the Representatives condemned him all the same. The slaughter went on too slowly for the 'patriots', who were just about to eclipse even the rapidity of the *Tribunal révolutionnaire* of Paris by erecting a scaffold which was to do the work of four guillotines at a blow. Still, later, Brune got certificates of his kindness from several persons, one even naming a lugger after him: a fact quite compatible with severity towards others.

Brune is said to have been given in September 1793 the command of a division of the Armée des Pyrénées Occidentales, but I cannot believe that he ever served with that army. Either his troops were considered as part of it, for Bordeaux belonged to its district, or, as is more likely, some of the troops of 'Pyrénées

Occidentales' may have been sent to Bordeaux: indeed, we find the Representatives on the 18th October 1793 reporting that Frégeville, a General of 'Pyrénées Occidentales',<sup>1</sup> whose arrangements and maintenance of discipline they praised, had just given over the command into the hands of the 'patriote Brune'. Then it is said that he had to return to Paris in disguise and to hide himself there with a compatriot. Of course the 'patriots', even the most extreme, were constantly suspecting one another, and we find in July 1794, that is, just before Thermidor, a woman about to be executed being asked whether Brune had not taken her by the hand, saying that the Republic could not exist. In reality he had only said that if there were no God the laws could not have any vigour, and that if there were no morals the Republic could not exist, because a Republic could only be founded on morality: very creditable sentiments for a patriot to entertain, but obviously dangerous to express. Danican says that an accusation was made against Brune in the full Convention on the 10th November 1794, of having stolen a number of horses in Bordeaux; Danican, for his part, assuring us that Brune took the horses of a citizen Legris, with a quantity of carriages or of harness. According to Danican, Brune was a robber, but a good patriot of 1789, which covered all things. Barras describes how, going to see Robespierre in January or February 1794, he found the wife and daughter of the house where that tribune lived in a little court, the daughter spreading out linen to dry and the wife dressing vegetables. Two men in uniform were assisting in this work; one was Brune, the other General Danican,<sup>2</sup> who had served in La Vendée but who had been removed from command by Hoche and suspended, and was then trying to gain the favour of Robespierre in order to get his suspension removed, which he succeeded in doing before Thermidor. Brune and Danican, thus seen in union, were to face one another in the struggle in Paris during the 'Jour des Sections', Danican having by then shown himself to be a Royalist. The presence of Brune in Robespierre's household probably showed that he

<sup>1</sup> Not to be confused with Général Frégéville of 'Pyrénées Orientales'. This is probably Henri, Marquis de Frégeville (1740-1803). Phipps, iii. 203 and note 3.

<sup>2</sup> Général Louis-Michel-Auguste Thevenet, dit Danican (1764-1848), Chassin, *Vend. Pat.* iii. 240-1, 348-56; Chassin, *Pacif.*, i. 29-30, 121; *Biog. Cont.*, ii. 1186-7.

was drawing away from Danton, whose friend and aide-de-camp he had hitherto been, and from whom he had been inseparable. He had been warned of the danger his protector ran in the struggle between the two leaders which was evidently approaching. When Danton appeared before the *Tribunal révolutionnaire* he was especially struck with the absence of Brune, who had promised to bring a powerful help.

In 1794, the year when first Danton and then Robespierre was struck down, and the Terror ceased, there were not so many movements amongst the men with whom we are concerned. Brune, I take it, was in Paris all this year. Three commanders came: Jourdan, recalled from the 'Nord' on the 12th January, lived in anxiety, hearing the tumbrils on their way to the scaffold, where he might be ordered at any moment; but on the 19th January he was only sent into retirement. Pichegru, his successor with the 'Nord', arrived from the 'Rhin' in the middle of January; probably he did not see his disgraced predecessor—that might have been dangerous, and he went to the 'Nord' on the 6th February. Beauharnais,<sup>1</sup> who had long left the 'Rhin', and who, living in retirement, had tempted fate by making his existence remembered, was placed in the Carmes prison on the 14th March, going to the Conciergerie on the 22nd July and to the guillotine next day. The young General Marceau, apparently looked on with favour in the Capital, came from La Vendée, where he had disagreed with his commander, in February, and went to the Armée des Ardennes, and thence to the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' for Fleurus, about the 12th April. The final struggle amongst the 'patriots' was beginning, and on the 24th March the extreme Revolutionaries, the followers of Hébert, went to the scaffold, soon followed by the 'Moderates', Brune's friends, men like Danton and Camille Desmoulins. Hoche, leaving the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', which he had led to victory, and sent to Nice to be entrapped,<sup>2</sup> entered the Carmes on the 12th April, going on to the Conciergerie on the 16th May. The day after Hoche reached the Carmes, Danton was guillotined, as I have said, and Hoche must have been in great danger. On the 19th May Lieut.-Colonel Murat was in Paris, probably for a short time only.

The *coup d'état* of the 9th Thermidor (27th July 1794) has some

<sup>1</sup> Joséphine's husband. Phipps, i, 201.

<sup>2</sup> Phipps, ii. 122-3.



little interest for us, though Brune alone amongst the future Marshals can have had any part in it. The political side is easily understood. After the death of Danton, Robespierre had gained a position of dangerous pre-eminence, and, according to his defenders, he intended to strike at a few members of the Convention who had been guilty of peculation. The Convention was now like a masterless pack of hounds, ready to turn on any game pointed out to it: ready also to devour any leader if he wavered for a moment. If Robespierre merely intended to strike a few, he made a fatal mistake; and his vague denunciations gave a powerful weapon to his adversaries, men like Fouché and Tallien, who, seeing themselves so near to death, took courage from despair, and succeeded in convincing many other Deputies that they too were amongst the intended victims: 'You are in the next batch: I have seen your name', being a most convincing argument. Barras had pointed out the danger run by Danton when he threatened instead of acting, and Robespierre now was in the same position. Attacked in the Convention, he was howled down when he attempted to defend himself, and was arrested. Released by his supporters, he and the other Deputies went to the Hôtel de Ville and were deliberating on striking a blow at the Convention when the force sent by that body arrived; a shot wounded Robespierre, all defence broke down, and amidst the glad shouts of men and the wild dances of women he went to the scaffold, one shriek of agony being wrung from him when the executioner tore the bandage from his broken jaw.

Though the mills of God grind slowly,  
 Yet they grind exceeding small;  
 Though with patience He stands waiting,  
 With exactness grinds He all.

All this is simple enough, but when we come to the military side our ground is very uncertain. As far as arms were concerned, Robespierre had seemed safe enough. Hanriot, who was devoted to him, had been appointed Commandant of the National Guard after the 31st May 1793, so that Robespierre might consider that he had the armed forces of the Capital in his hands. Hanriot<sup>1</sup> was a curiously obscure man. A brief notice in the archives of the War Office shows him as formerly

<sup>1</sup> François Hanriot, or Henriot (1761-94). Michaud, *Biog. Univ.* xx. 200-4; Hamel, *Hist. de Robespierre*, iii. 703-8; Aulard, *Taine*, note 2, p. 282.

*Commis de barrière*; *Commandant en chef la Garde Nationale de Paris*; General of Brigade the 3rd July 1793; General of Division the 19th September 1793. This rapid promotion tells its own tale. M. Aulard says that he was not involved in the September massacres, that being another Hanriot, and objects, as unsubstantiated, to Taine's statement that he had been dismissed from one employment for theft. Robespierre's enemies, however, had method in their procedure: the companies of gunners, some of his warmest partisans, were sent from the Capital to the armies, and all arms, except those used for the public service, were ordered to be placed in the halls of the *Comités de surveillance*. The two powerful bodies, the *Comité de salut public* and the *Comité de sûreté générale*, each contained a majority of Robespierre's antagonists and worked against him; but he, a mere orator, trusted in the tongue which had brought death to so many, and seems never to have realized the necessity for protection by an armed force. There were no regular troops in the Capital, but there was a large number of armed men. In the first place the six Sections had companies of infantry, part of whom were paid, armed with muskets and pikes, the total strength being about 100,000 men. Then each Section had a company of artillery, with two guns. This force was very important, and was composed of men who ought to have been sent to the frontiers, who were picked by the commander of the armed infantry and by the Commune. They had a special staff. It was in these gunners that Hanriot and the Commune trusted. There was also a number of *gendarmes* of various sorts, all ardent 'patriots'; some companies of pensioners; and 3,000 cadets at the École de Mars, in the Sablons plain. As for the Convention itself, it had a guard of grenadiers and *canonniers gendarmes*, 199 strong; some ordinary *gendarmes*, horse and foot; some veterans, and a detachment of 300 men from each of the Sections in turn, relieved daily. Besides these, twenty gunners were ready to serve two guns placed permanently at the entry to the Carrousel.

The strange thing about all this is that, whatever some historians may say, neither side made any real preparations for a struggle;<sup>1</sup> the Commune no doubt considering that they held the armed force, as they might have done with a better commander

<sup>1</sup> Compare Martin, *Hist. de France*, ii. 247, with Martel, *Fouché*, ii. 144-7.

than Hanriot, and the Thermidoriens from sheer ineptitude, as can be seen in the detail of their proceedings given by le Comte de Martel. Take one instance: orderlies were sent to the Arsenal to dispatch cartridges, &c., to the Convention in an artillery wagon. Fortunately the commanders at the Arsenal, having taken part with the Convention, saw the danger of sending a wagon through the streets close to the head-quarters of the Commune, and they dispatched the ammunition partly on the orderlies themselves and partly on an infantry detachment, each man of which carried 120 cartridges. We have good examples of the wrong and the right mode of action in such matters. In 1870 when Thiers wished to remove a train of artillery from the Communists, he sent a number of teams, the drivers of which were, of course, helpless against the mutineers. In 1795, when Bonaparte wanted artillery from Sablons for Vendémiaire, he sent Murat with a cavalry regiment, and the guns were brought off from under the noses of the men sent by the Sections to seize them. If the Thermidoriens had had any fixed plan, the first thing would have been to have obtained the command of the armed force; but all the proceedings of both parties were so inept that it is worth following them, as probably much was learnt now that was applied in later strokes. Barras says that he had advised the Committees to arrest Hanriot and his assistant, Lavalette;<sup>1</sup> but nothing was done till the debate in which Robespierre fell had begun in the Convention. Then, between 1 and 1.30 p.m., the Convention decreed the arrest of Hanriot and his staff, and of Dumas, the President of the Revolutionary Tribunal, for their conduct at the Jacobins on the previous day. To these names the *Comité de sûreté générale* added that of Payan, the National Agent with the Commune. This step would have paralysed the Commune, but the arrests should have been made with a sufficient force to ensure the custody of the prisoners and a successor to Hanriot should have been named at once, whereas it was only at about 5 p.m. that the *Comité* altered the command; all ranks above the chiefs of the six Legions of the National Guard were suppressed, and each chief of a Legion was to command in turn. Finally, the Mayor of Paris and the

<sup>1</sup> Général Louis-Jean-Baptiste Thomas Lavalette, guillotined with Robespierre on the 28th July 1794. Not to be confused with Bonaparte's A.D.C. and Minister of the Empire.



National Agent, two men devoted to Robespierre, and the commander for the time of the National Guard, were to watch over the security of the Convention. The wolves were placed in charge of the fold. Then, most foolishly, the *Comité*, instead of using the commander of the 1st Legion, Fauconnier, the commander for the day, to collect a force to protect the Convention, sent him, apparently unescorted, to the stronghold of their enemies, the *Maison Commune*, where naturally he was arrested.

Meantime the arrests ordered by the *Comité* had been carried out, except that Hanriot, for a moment about to yield, plucked up courage when advised to resist, and broke into open revolt against the Convention. He had triumphed before, on the 31st May, and counted on doing so again. Mounting his horse he ordered all the gunners and 400 men of each Legion to assemble at the *Maison Commune* in the Place de Grève, and he himself rode about, calling to arms and shouting that the best patriots were being arrested, this referring to himself and the others I have named, for Robespierre was still battling in the Convention. The troops began to collect, as they were bound to do, for Hanriot was their lawful commander, though the object of their assembly was not known. At about half-past four in the afternoon the arrest of Robespierre and his friends was voted by the Convention; knowing this, between five and six o'clock Hanriot harangued the troops, and then, setting them in motion for the Convention, he himself most foolishly galloped ahead with fifty *gendarmes*, still shouting to the people. Arrived at the Hôtel of the *Comité de sûreté générale*, close to the Convention, he dismounted, and, accompanied only by his staff, went in to the Committee. Here he was seized and bound, whilst outside the chief of the 2nd Legion, who was guarding the Convention, overawed the *gendarmes*, letting them know that Hanriot was arrested. This was the first success to the Convention, as the leader of the forces of the Commune was powerless. Behind Hanriot, however, came the force from the Place de Grève, led by a more determined man, Coffinhal, the Vice-President of the Revolutionary Tribunal. To get this body to start it had been necessary to allege that the object only was to present a petition to the Convention for the release of the men arrested. Between 8 and 9 p.m. some 3,000 men with at least 20 guns started, and occupied the Place du Carrousel and the neighbouring streets

and squares; some of the guns were laid against the hall of the Convention.<sup>1</sup> The commander of the Guard of the Convention tried, as with Hanriot's escort, to get the men to abandon their enterprise, but he was hustled by Coffinhal and other leaders and was made prisoner. Coffinhal and the leaders then penetrated into the *Comité*, delivered Hanriot, and tried to get the gunners to fire on the Convention. This would not have been so horrible a thing as the Convention later chose to believe: the guns were only four-pounders, and good masonry ought to have stood much battering. But the greater part of the men brought from the Place de Grève, joined by the gunners, would not consent to this.

This was the decisive moment, but the Jacobin leaders quailed. The fact was that the force at their disposal had been steadily diminishing, for when Hanriot's order to send detachments from the Legions to the Place de Grève was known, the *Comité de salut public* had issued orders forbidding it; several of the Legions had called back their men, and the process was going on. Mounting his horse, Hanriot, instead of leading his men on the Convention, began a fresh series of shouts, declaring that his innocence was recognized and that the decree arresting him was cancelled by the Convention. Obviously this left no reason for attacking the Convention, and, still shouting, Hanriot led the way back to the Place de Grève; it was in one way a clever trick, as it enabled him to pose as still being the commander of the armed force, but the detachments kept melting away. It was now known that Robespierre, his group, and Hanriot, were 'hors la loi', and it was but a small body that followed Hanriot to the Place de Grève, where he met Robespierre and his friends, released from the prisons to which they had been sent. Here all military interest ceases. Barras, placed in command of the forces that the Convention had at last assembled, came up; the troops in the Place de Grève either ran away or joined him, and all the men who had been like iron when slaughtering others went to their doom without a murmur. Saint-Just, so rampant with the armies, had not a word or a blow to save his own life. It is amazing to think how little real force, or the sympathy of the people, had been possessed by the murderous gang who now

<sup>1</sup> For the exact positions occupied by the guns and the troops, see Martel, *Fouché*, ii. 234-9.

went to the guillotine. Thermidor in its military aspect was a mere scramble, in which victory lay with the most enterprising and most careless of the letter of the law. Bonaparte's arrangements at Vendémiaire and at Brumaire were very different; but the comparison would be too unfair. Still, it will be seen that it was not in the hall of the Convention that the fate of Robespierre was determined.

The men who had planned the fall of Robespierre had had no intention of stopping the Terror, but the general longing for its termination made it impossible to continue the system, and, though the prisons opened slowly, yet they did open, and gave up what soon would have been the dead. On the 28th July 1794 Hoche came out of the Conciergerie,<sup>1</sup> and on the 16th August he was appointed to command the Armée des Côtes de Cherbourg. On the 6th August Joséphine de Beauharnais was released from the Carmes, and had to face her pecuniary difficulties. Kellermann, who had been imprisoned in the Conciergerie since the 6th November 1793, was at last tried, and acquitted on the 8th November 1794, after which he probably remained in Paris until March 1795, when we shall find him going to a fresh command in the south. As well as these two, only Brune, of the men with whom we are concerned, was in Paris during Thermidor; a General of the armed force, we may safely assume that he served under Barras on the side of the Convention. Barras had been playing for his life, and would have had none but bitter feelings for Brune had that General been waiting on events as he had when Danton fell, when Barras had remarked on his want of civil courage. Now Barras became his protector; it is alleged, as we shall see a little farther on, that after the next affair Barras proposed to give him the command in Paris, and certainly he took him with him on a tour to the north. One thing must be said before leaving Thermidor: with Robespierre died his younger brother, Augustin, the patron and friend of General Bonaparte, whom we have seen endangered by his fall.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Masson, *Joséphine*, 242-3, makes the date the 4th August, but see Hoche's letter, 'Je suis libre', of 28th July. Cuneo, *Hoche*, ii. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Phipps, iii. 231.



## XII

### VENDÉMIAIRE

(July 1794 to April 1797)

Germinal and Prairial. Bonaparte in Paris. Vendémiaire. First trophies from Italy.

#### CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

- 1794 6th September. 'Sambre-et-Meuse' reaches the Rhine.  
November to January. French victories in the Netherlands and Spain.
- 1795 17th February. First Pacification of La Vendée by Hoche.  
5th April. Peace of Bâle between France and Prussia.  
June. Hostilities break out again in La Vendée.  
21st July. Defeat of Royalist expedition to Quiberon.  
22nd July. Peace between France and Spain.  
October to November. Defeats on the Rhine.  
24th November. Victory of Schérer at Loano.
- 1796 January to May. Armistice on the Rhine.

For further Contemporary Events see lists at beginning of Chapters I to VII.

IN 1795 the effects of the Terror were ceasing, and amidst many signs of returning common sense the establishment of the new Directorial Constitution showed that the idea of governing by a single chamber was at last abandoned.<sup>1</sup> General Clarke, who had been either out of France or in retirement since he left the 'Rhin' in 1793, returned or appeared about February, and on the 1st March was employed in the War Office as *chef du bureau topographique*, where he remained until he went to Italy in 1797. On the 3rd March Kellermann left to command the Armée d'Italie. About the middle of March he was followed by General Berthier, at last permitted to use his undoubted talents as Chief of the Staff to an army; he now rejoined Kellermann, whom he had left just before Valmy. Pichegru now appeared in Paris. On the 29th March 1795 he had left his command, the Armée du Nord, to take up a new post at the head of the Armée du Rhin-et-Moselle. He was just in time for the affair of the 12th Germinal (1st April 1795), in which Brune also probably was engaged. The Jacobins, trying to turn the tide which had set

<sup>1</sup> For a description of the new Constitution, see pp. 256.

against them on the fall of their chief, Robespierre, and showing a certain amount of the courage which had failed them then, rose, and invaded the hall of the Convention. A commander was wanted for the troops of the Convention, and nothing was more natural than to appoint Pichegru, then high in favour, for much of the credit for the relief of Landau had fallen to him, and now the glory of the conquest of Holland, really due so much to Jourdan, was also attributed to him.<sup>1</sup> He suppressed the insurrection with much ease. Barras, who claims most of the credit for anything he was engaged in, asserts that the Convention wished to give him the command, but, at his instance, allotted it to Pichegru. Then, when certain Deputies were to be transported, the mob halted their carriages on the Place de la Révolution, and Pichegru, arriving on the scene, was surrounded and insulted and had to dismount. Up then came Barras, according to his own story, with a battalion of the National Guard, and carried off Pichegru, whom he found all trembling. The story may be true, for without the battalion Pichegru would have been in danger enough. One thing is certain: when he made his report to the Convention he was saluted as the 'saviour of the country', and he received the rapturous thanks of the Assembly, after which he handed over the command to General Menou,<sup>2</sup> and about the 14th April 1795 went on to his new army on the Rhine. No doubt Brune, as I have said, had been engaged under Pichegru. Danican, indeed, asserts that on the departure of Pichegru, Barras proposed to give the command at Paris to Brune. 'C'était un coup de parti pour la cause des cannibales.' The preference given to Menou was, according to Danican, the cause of Brune's hatred of that General, whom he tried to ruin.

On the 10th May General of Brigade Bonaparte arrived from 'Italie', with his A.D.C.s, Captains Marmont and Junot. Removed from his post in command of the artillery of the Armée d'Italie after Thermidor, he had been ordered on the 29th March to go to the Armée de l'Ouest to command its artillery; but he was determined not to go to La Vendée, a natural feeling shared by most officers, who disliked the civil war. M. Schuermans, in his valuable *Itinéraire général de Napoléon*, makes

<sup>1</sup> For this campaign see Phipps, ii, especially 194-5.

<sup>2</sup> He had fought in La Vendée for a time; Phipps, iii, Chapter I.

Bonaparte only reach Paris on the 25th May; but I follow Colonel Jung, for it is certain that Bonaparte was in the Capital during the 1<sup>st</sup> Prairial (the 20th May): indeed he himself says so.<sup>1</sup> Now, of the men we are concerned with, the following were in Paris: Generals of Brigade Bonaparte and Brune, Lieut.-Colonel Murat, and Captains Marmont and Junot. Bonaparte probably knew nothing of Murat, whose regiment, which had come from the 'Nord' during the spring, was quartered outside the town. Brune most likely he soon knew, as both were *protégés* of Barras. Brune, indeed, at this time had been taken by Barras on a mission to the Channel ports, the northern Departments, Belgium, and Holland, to provide for the provisioning of the Capital, whence they only returned after Prairial. Bourrienne, who had been with Bonaparte at Brienne and who was to be his secretary, joined him from Germany soon after his arrival, but went to live at Sens in July 1795. The affair of the 12th Germinal had been but the rehearsal for the more serious one of the 1<sup>st</sup> Prairial, when the Jacobins made their final and desperate insurrection, in which they invaded the hall of the Convention and killed one of the Representatives. The Convention had not a large force, but amongst their troops was the 21st *Chasseurs-à-cheval*, the regiment to which Lieut.-Colonel Murat belonged. Released from his imprisonment at Amiens,<sup>2</sup> he had rejoined his corps at Paris; and he now brought up his men, the first cavalry the Convention could use against the insurgents. So serious was the affair that Barras, then at Ghent with Brune, when he heard of it determined to march on the Capital, to support the Convention and retake the town if it had been lost, with such troops as he could collect, placing them not under Brune but under General Leclair. Menou, however, who, as I have just said, had replaced Pichegru in command at the Capital, succeeded in suppressing the insurrection, and on the 12th July he was appointed to command the Armée de l'Intérieur. Murat's services, although noted, passed without official recognition, and the statement that his action won him the rank of Lieut.-Colonel is a mistake.

<sup>1</sup> *Corr. Nap.* i, Nos. 40, 41, where he says that on 1<sup>st</sup> Prairial he was morally certain that Salicetti was in the house of Madame Permon. *Madame Junot*, French ed. i. 227-68; Eng. ed. of 1883, 85-107. Madame Junot is wrong in putting Barras at Paris during the 1<sup>st</sup> Prairial; see Barras, i. 229-30.

<sup>2</sup> Phipps, i. 338-9.



On the 13th June Bonaparte, transferred from the artillery to the infantry, was again ordered to the Armée de l'Ouest, but he persisted in remaining in Paris although in a state of great poverty. Marmont, despairing of his General's prospects, with a lightness prophetic of his conduct in 1814 determined to leave him, and, with his permission, got himself appointed to the artillery of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', then before Mayence, where he went about the 20th July. One A.D.C. alone, the faithful Junot, remained, sharing his purse with his General; this is characteristic of the two men. Another future A.D.C., Captain Lavalette, arrived in Paris from the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' in the middle of August 1795, to join the staff of General Baraguey d'Hilliers, Chief of the Staff to General Menou. At the moment Lavalette knew nothing of Bonaparte, but he was soon to serve under him at Vendémiaire, or the 'Jour des Sections'. Although I try to keep clear of the fortunes of Bonaparte, some reference is permissible to their curious state in the summer and autumn of 1795. His obstinacy in sticking to Paris whilst ordered to La Vendée was one of the signs of a character which well might have led him to the scaffold had he been prominent enough before Thermidor. He had actually, in some change of mood, sent his horses to La Vendée, where they, and Junot's orderly, were promptly captured by the insurgents. One of his plans was to go to Turkey with a detachment, to instruct the Turks. On the 16th August he was officially requested to proceed to the Armée de l'Ouest, or if, as he stated, he were ill, he would be replaced. Then on the 21st August he had the good luck to be appointed one of four Generals called on by the *Comité* to prepare operations for the armies; the others were General of Brigade Pully, Clarke, his future Minister of War, and Lacuée, who became his Director of Military Administration; his own task was to deal with Italy. Still he wished to go to Turkey, and on the 15th September his name was submitted to the *Comité de salut public*, to be sent with a staff to Constantinople. On the same day the *Comité* struck him off the employed list for refusing to go to his post,<sup>1</sup> Cambacérès, his future Arch-Chancellor, signing the order first. This only left him the hope of the mission to Turkey; and even on the 26th September he

<sup>1</sup> This is denied in *Bourrienne et ses erreurs*, i, Chapter IV, but see my note in *Bourrienne*, Eng. ed. of 1885, i. 27.

was writing that his journey was practically certain, though the signs of coming trouble in France might delay it. It must be remembered that he was far from unknown: indeed, one of the *Comité*, Debry, objected to 'such a distinguished officer' being sent away from France to Turkey, and would have preferred to promote him in his own arm. Also he constantly saw Barras, who was one of the leading members of the Convention.

The affair, or *coup d'état*, of the 13th Vendémiaire An III (5th October 1795), not only brought Bonaparte to the front but also linked him with two of his future Marshals, General Brune and Lieut.-Colonel Murat. The Convention, which had ruled France since the 21st September 1792, was about to end its existence, after having decreed what is known as the Directorial Constitution. Under this Constitution there were to be two Councils, that of the *Cinq-Cents*, composed of men at least thirty years old, and chosen by the people in their primary assemblies, which would meet at the Palais Bourbon and propose laws; and that of the *Anciens*, with 250 members, also chosen by the people; they were to be men who were at least forty years old, married or widowers, and were to meet at the Tuileries and sanction laws proposed by the *Cinq-Cents*. One-third of each Council changed each year. At the head of the Government was to be the Directory, with five members, chosen by the *Anciens* from lists presented by the *Cinq-Cents*, and one of whom was to be changed each year. They were to meet at the Petit-Luxembourg, promulgate and execute laws, appoint responsible Ministers, and have all executive power except that of declaring war. Always arbitrary, the Convention, however, was unwilling to die or to bend to any law even of its own making. It had possessed an ascendancy over France which only Louis XIV and Napoleon ever equalled, and its members shrank from descending into the people. Possibly also they were not sure of their own personal fates under any new régime, for many private hatreds and animosities had to be satisfied, and it was becoming a question not so much of saving the principles of the Revolution, as the men of the Revolution. The Convention therefore took the astounding step of decreeing that two-thirds of each of the new Councils must be taken from amongst the members of the Convention itself. This was a shock to many people who had been looking forward to obtaining the power of establishing

a totally different régime. The Moderate or Constitutional party wished to get rid of men who had steeped their hands in blood ; whilst the Royalists hoped to acquire a majority in the Councils and to make a peaceful Restoration. How little assurance the members of the Convention had of obtaining a fresh vote of confidence was shown by the extreme step they had taken.

The country disapproved of this measure. All the Sections of Paris, except one, declaimed against its illegality, and determined to resist. As I have said, they each had an armed force and trained battalions of the National Guard, so that they were formidable in numbers. Prominent amongst them was the Section le Pelletier—the district north of the Palais Royal, formerly that of the Filles Saint-Thomas—which had some fine battalions of the National Guard, and whose head-quarters were in the Rue Vivienne, running north from the Palais-Royal, which then stopped short at the Convent of the Filles Saint-Thomas.<sup>1</sup> Whilst the Sections began to arm, and to organize a Government of their own, the Convention took its precautions. Menou was still in command of the Armée de l'Intérieur, and part of his troops were in the camp of Marly, where was the Chasseur regiment of Lieut.-Colonel Murat. That officer was in a very disconsolate state of mind, for he could not get his rank as Colonel recognized ; what he wanted was to get on the staff, as he considered that a regiment was a mere cul-de-sac whence jealousy prevented him emerging. As the agitation grew in the Capital the troops were brought up from Marly to the Camp de Sablons, and the Convention formed a battalion of Jacobins, mostly men released from the prisons where they had been since Prairial ; this they called the 'bataillon sacré,' and their adversaries the 'bataillon des Terroristes'. This was too much for Menou, who had seen enough of the Jacobins, and he refused to command such a body ; so it was entrusted to General Berruyer, and it really did good work for the Convention.

On the evening of the 4th October 1795 Menou was ordered to clear the hall in the Convent of the Filles Saint-Thomas, where the Section le Pelletier met, and to disarm the Section. Neither he nor his men were zealous in the matter ; Menou himself had no liking for the Convention, and he had already spoken

<sup>1</sup> Fournier, E., *Chroniques et légendes des rues de Paris*, nouvelle édition, Paris, Dentu, 1893 (pp. 290-2).



strongly about the character of the 'patriots' they had wished to add to his troops. He sent a small party, which found the Convent occupied in force by the Section and which waited until he arrived with a Representative at ten that night. He brought a sufficient force, with four guns, but he jammed all arms in the narrow streets whilst the Representative negotiated with the Section. The President of the Section pointed out that it would be difficult to crush them, and Menou heard the drums beating to arms all round him. The Representative wavered, and at last it was agreed that both parties should retire: back went Menou, whilst the men of the Section simply filed out of one door and in again by another. Had the Sections that night marched on the Convent they would have found it but feebly defended, and France might have given herself a proper Government. Moved by a curious spasm of energy, soon after midnight Menou, taking with him Murat's Chasseur regiment from the Place Louis XV, made a sort of raid into the le Pelletier district, moving up the Chaussée d'Antin to the Boulevard Montmartre, when the future General Thiébault fell on and dispersed a battalion of the Section; but this had no result, and by three in the morning Menou dismissed his party in the Place du Carrousel, under a heavy rain which perhaps accounted for the Sections keeping quiet. The failure of Menou was the more dangerous to the Convention as it was evident that neither he nor most of his officers had any sympathy with its cause, and the members at once determined to place the chief command in the hands of one of themselves—Barras, the patron of Brune and Bonaparte. His fine presence and his experience as an officer were in his favour; he was accustomed to the Paris mob: indeed, he had commanded during Thermidor with courage and skill, and had been nominated for, but declined, the command during the 12th Germinal. Barras accepted, but the situation was in one way more serious than at Thermidor, when the cowardice of Hanriot had made his defeat easy. A regular General was required to replace the half-hearted Menou, and seeing the *Comité* at a loss Barras said that he had the man they wanted: a little Corsican who would not make any difficulties when the appointment was made. Those Representatives who had been with the Armée d'Italie knew well both Bonaparte and his talents; the *Comité* approved the choice, and nominated

him as second-in-command. It was now 4.30 a.m. on the 5th October.

This nomination of Bonaparte, often considered as something extraordinary, was perfectly natural; his work at Toulon was known not only to Barras, but, as I have just said, to other Representatives who then had been in the south; he had just been recommended for appointment as one of the advisers for warlike operations to Debry; he was too good an officer to be sent abroad, and he was in constant communication with Barras. Hitherto mere mobs had had to be dealt with: this time it was a large and well-armed force (except that it had no guns) whose attack was feared. Barras was very well as a figure-head, but with the 4,000 or 5,000 regular troops which were to be used, a regular officer was desirable to handle them; otherwise such a man as Brune might have been chosen. One is inclined to believe that the idea of employing Bonaparte must have been early in the mind of Barras, for on the evening of the 3rd October Barras wrote to him to come to him at Chaillot next day at 10 a.m., 'toute affaire cessante', while Menou only failed in the night of the 4th October. Barras, as he said, knew that Bonaparte would have no scruples, and this was important: not only Menou but two other Generals were dismissed for their unwillingness to act in this affair.<sup>1</sup> If I understand the hours rightly, Barras had sent for Bonaparte at latest when the *Comité* had sanctioned his appointment, but the General did not come to the Carrousel, where Barras had placed his head-quarters, until nine at night on the 4th October, and even then the Convention had not approved the nomination. Bonaparte had been uncertain which side, if any, to take, for the overbearing and illegal action of the Convention found few supporters, whilst, rightly or not, the Sections were taken as acting for the Royalists; but at last he determined to throw in his lot with the actual Government of the country. Had he joined the Sections he would hardly have led them, for he was not well known to them, but he might have got them to seize the artillery at Sablons, when, if he had been given a free hand in its use, it might have gone hard with the Convention. Still, success with the Royalists did not promise him any such future as with the Convention. Barras says that he reproached him with this delay,

<sup>1</sup> *Sciout, Directoire*, i, 357.

but an artilleryman was wanted and Barras knew the worth of this one.

Barras may have had something to do with the posting of the troops, but Bonaparte, a General of artillery, now—at 4.30 a.m. on the 5th October—proceeded to place the guns, and the defenders finally stood as follows. General Berruyer, whom we have seen commanding the Armée de l'Intérieur and that of the Reserve (and taking Berthier to La Vendée), and who therefore ought to have known the ground well, held the gates of the Cour du Manège opening on the terraces of the Feuillans, and those in the cul-de-sac or blind alley of the Rue du Dauphin, which had its mouth opposite the Church of Saint-Roch. This was to the west of the Tuileries. On the right of Berruyer and more to the east, Dupont-Chaumont, the brother of the Baylen General,<sup>1</sup> held the Rue de l'Échelle and the little Rue Saint-Louis running from the Petite Place du Manège to the Rue Saint-Honoré. Still farther to the right Brune held the Rue de Nicaise and the Rue de Rohan, which led across the Rue Saint-Honoré to the Palais-Royal. All these streets opened into the Rue Saint-Honoré, and each detachment had two guns to sweep that street. The eastern front, the Louvre, had a big enough garrison to make it impervious to an assault, whilst the Pont-Neuf, almost under the Palace, was blocked by Carteaux, the nominal captor of Marseilles, who had guns to cover the approaches. The river covered the connecting wing, but on the quays under that wing batteries swept the quays on the other or left bank. The Pont-Royal at the southern end of the Tuileries was held by General Verdière,<sup>2</sup> and Bonaparte had placed the guns here skilfully. One battery looked straight south up the Rue de Bac whilst others faced the quays above and below: that looking up the river was pushed forward to the little Rue de Beaune, the next street to the Rue de Bac. The open space in front of the Tuileries, where the 'Pont-Tournant' was placed over the ditch of the garden of the Tuileries, was pretty safe, as the Sections had no mounted troops. This space and the roads to the west were held by the reserve, amongst which was Murat's

<sup>1</sup> The Baylen General was Général Comte Pierre Dupont de l'Étang. Phipps, i. 216–17. This is Général Pierre-Antoine Dupont-Chaumont.

<sup>2</sup> Jean-Christophe Collin, *dit* Verdière (1754–1806), *Fastes*, iv. 25–6; not the General Verdier of the Empire.



Chasseur regiment, and the reserve artillery park under Montchoisy ; its task was to be ready to cover the retreat, which, if it had to be made, was to be on Saint-Cloud-Meudon. This position was very strong, for the narrow streets which intersected it, though difficult for an assailant to force, gave good openings for sorties. On the other hand the Sections had a great advantage in numbers, for they could have brought up some 30,000 or 40,000 men, part of whom were well armed and trained. They had no guns, for those had been given up after Prairial,<sup>1</sup> but they could easily have blockaded the Convention in its hold and have starved it and its defenders out. Unfortunately they had chosen for their leader General Danican, who we have seen trying to get his suspension removed by Robespierre before Thermidor. This he had succeeded in, and now he had become a Royalist and had deluded the Sections as to his capability. Always a bad commander, he ruined his party by determining on an open assault, and he delivered it in a disastrous manner. Probably he and his party thought that the Convention would not fight the people, but they had to deal with desperate men, who were accustomed to wade through blood to their ends and might well fear the scaffold in case of defeat.

That day, the 5th October 1795, the Sections attacked. The actual struggle will be best understood by inspection of the Map of Paris in 1798, ordered to be drawn up by the *Conseil Municipal* in 1887, the contemporary plan of the Capital in 1792 by Wallis, or that at page 30 of Fain's *Manuscrit de l'An III*. Neither the Rue de Rivoli nor the building running along that street and connecting the northern ends of the Tuileries and the Louvre then existed ; nor were there any bridges near, except the Pont-Neuf, higher up than the façade of the Louvre, and the Pont-Royal at the southern end of the façade of the Tuileries. The open space which now lies between the Tuileries and the Louvre, and all the ground between the two palaces and the wing along the river to the Rue Saint-Honoré, was covered with buildings, through which short narrow streets ran from the Manège, the Petite Place du Carrousel, the Carrousel itself, &c., to the Rue Saint-Honoré. This great block, bounded to the north by the Rue Saint-Honoré, to the east and west by the Louvre and the Tuileries, and to the south by the river, together

<sup>1</sup> Sciout, *Directoire*, i, note 3, p. 359.

with the two bridges, was held by the troops of the Convention. So far they had but few guns, and now Murat was sent with 300 horse to bring up the forty pieces left, most foolishly, with little or no guard at the camp de Sablons. Moving quickly, Murat reached Sablons just as a battalion of the Sections appeared on the same errand. In the open plain the cavalry had matters their own way: indeed the infantry may not even have brought teams—a point Bonaparte would have seen to for his side—as only some 15 or 20 men had been left with the train. Murat with his dash and swagger was the very man to overawe his opponents: the guns were carried off, and by 6 a.m. on the 5th October the heavy roll of the train as it entered the Tuileries told of his success. This work of Murat's, by which forty guns were placed at the disposal of Bonaparte, was more creditable than appears at first sight, for it may be remembered that it was the failure of a similar attempt in 1871 which caused the first triumph of the Commune of Paris. Including some 4,000 to 5,000 regular troops the Convention now had some 8,000 armed men, with forty guns.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps to its own surprise it was placing its last man in the field, for, wishing to have all possible strength, Bonaparte characteristically enough had sent 800 stand of arms to the members of the Convention and their officials, so that they could act as a reserve. A joint committee of the *Comité de salut public* and the *Comité de sûreté générale*, under the presidency of Cambacérès, had been discussing matters uselessly: it is pleasant to think of the faces of the future Arch-Chancellor and his colleagues as they received from Bonaparte this grim reminder of the seriousness of the approaching struggle. It was no longer a question of shrieking down the lives of other men, but of defending their own.

The Sections had lost valuable time and had given the Convention a breathing space to make their preparations, but still the day of the 5th October began badly for their opponents, part of whose supplies of arms and food had been seized and who lost one advantage they had possessed. Occupying the bridges, they cut all direct communication between the Sections on both banks, but in the afternoon the troops of the Sections

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon in *Corr. Nap.* xxix. 52, 54, says 8,500 men with 40 guns: in his Notes on the *Manuscrit venu de Sainte-Hélène*, Montholon, ii. 207, he says 6,000 troops of the line with 30 guns.

gradually formed and began their march on the position. As one heavy column approached the Pont-Neuf, Carteaux, who held that post, overawed, abandoned it, just as Lavalette was bringing him an order to stand firm, and fell back on the Louvre; whereupon the column poured over and the two masses from both sides of the river joined, and advanced from the north and east on the Convention. Determined as the Convention was to resist to the uttermost, still, it was unwilling to fire on the people, a crime for which it could be denounced as it had denounced others; consequently the assailants were allowed to approach in safety. Filling the Rue Saint-Honoré, they swarmed up the steps of Saint-Roch and occupied that church, whilst the troops of the Convention drew back under cover. Danican's own account of his conduct at this time is hard to understand. It was, he says, only in the night of the 4th October that he was nominated by the *Comité centrale* as *Commandant des Sections Réunies*, and it was not till 9 a.m. on the morning of the 5th that he marched with the battalion of the Théâtre Français, which he commanded, to the *Assemblée primaire* of the Section le Pelletier, where he met most of the Sections and an hour later took command. This delay would account for the slowness of the preparations of the Sections, whilst Barras and Bonaparte were hard at work on their side. Danican asserts that he urged the Sections not to attack the strong position of the forces of the Convention, but instead to offer the resistance of inertia, and, if attacked, then for each to defend himself in his own quarter, so as to force the Convention to disseminate its troops. He knew, he added, that 20,000 reinforcements for the Convention were to arrive that evening at the Capital. He was answered that the troops would not fire on their fellow citizens, that not an instant should be lost, and that victory was for them. Seeing that his hesitation made him mistrusted, he mounted and tried a policy of threats, massing his men against the position of the Convention whilst making them swear not to attack. All this, and the appeal he made to the *Comité*, might have been convincing had he not brought his men so close up to the position of the Convention that it was evident any chance shot might bring on the conflict that he professes to have tried to avoid. In fact, it is difficult not to believe that this is a mere defence made to excuse his failure. Barras alleges that he had ordered Brune to open



with his guns, when firing began, from which side it is impossible to say. For a few minutes the struggle was fierce: sixteen ranks of the Sections, crowded on the steps of Saint-Roch, swept the Rue du Dauphin with their fire; Berruyer's horse was killed under him, so was Bonaparte's, and Berruyer's column was driven back, whilst Brune, advancing without using his guns, was also repulsed. But the artillery of the Convention, firing case, soon cleared its way, and once out of the side streets it swept the Rue Saint-Honoré and the steps of Saint-Roch so effectually that the assailants took to flight, with such rapidity that a round shot fired from a gun down the street which had been so crowded, hit no one.

Bonaparte had led this part of the counter-attack, and when the Sections retired northwards to the Place Vendôme and the Palais-Royal, realizing that the stress on that side was over, he went round to the south front, to the Pont-Royal, in time to see the most foolish part of the day, for a heavy column of the Sections was solemnly coming down on the quays on the left bank right into the mouth of the guns he had placed ready for such an advance.<sup>1</sup> Taken in front by the guns of the Rue de Beaune and in flank by the batteries below the wing of the Louvre on the right bank, this unhappy column was shattered, and after displaying much bravery it had to disperse. With the south now secured the advance northwards was resumed, the Palais-Royal was taken, and Brune, smashing the doors with his guns, occupied the Théâtre de la République. The Sections were so cowed that now blank rounds from the guns broke up any attempt at re-forming. Beginning at 4.30 a.m., the affair was over by 6 p.m. Next morning it only remained to take Saint-Roch and some other points that the Sections had held during the night; the National Guard was disarmed, and the power of the people of Paris was broken. The Convention was triumphant in its last moments. The 13<sup>ème</sup> Vendémiaire An III was over, and on this day Bonaparte had set on its feet the Directorial Constitution which he was to overthrow at Brumaire. The cost of the day was not very great: Lavalette, who was engaged, and who had seen a good deal of fighting on the Rhine before, puts the loss of the defenders of the Convention at some

<sup>1</sup> Baron Fain, *Manuscrit de l'An Trois* (1794-5), Paris, Fain, 1828. See p. 355 especially. Thiébault, i. 538.

four or five men and that of the Sections at some forty killed and two hundred wounded, and even this he seems afraid might be considered an exaggeration.

Barras has chosen to make but little of the part taken by Bonaparte, saying that he reproached him for not coming sooner and told him that as all the posts were given to officers who had already arrived—Brune, for instance, who was placed at headquarters—Bonaparte was to be his A.D.C. It is as his A.D.C. that he represents him as acting, and, a strange thing for an A.D.C., as being on foot alongside the General on horseback. This looks as if Barras were taking advantage of Bonaparte undoubtedly not having any special post (which he would not have had as second-in-command); also it is to be noted that one account says Bonaparte had a horse shot under him, and so he may have been dismounted part of the time. Besides other accounts we have that of the future General Thiébault, not an indiscriminating admirer of Napoleon, who says that on joining the troops that morning he was told that Barras was in command, with General Bonaparte as second: 'Bonaparte,' said I, 'who the devil is that?'; but Thiébault goes on to describe his wonderful activity, and how he seemed to be everywhere at once, giving short but clear orders and making most admirable arrangements. He describes Bonaparte as directing the attack on Saint-Roch in person, and then when Thiébault, having taken part in it under him, galloped round to the Pont-Royal, he found him already there, apparently to meet the column coming by the quays. Barras, by the way, says he sent Bonaparte to the Pont-Neuf, whence he returned with news of the quay column making for the Pont-Royal: now it is strange if an A.D.C. on foot were sent on such a mission. In the same way Barras attributes to himself the dispatch of Murat for the Sablons artillery; whilst Jung asserts that as Bonaparte only knew of his appointment at 4.30 a.m. on the 5th he could not have been the person who sent Murat, for Murat had reached Sablons at 2 a.m. that day; he, however, attributes the mission to General Duterbie.<sup>1</sup> Barras himself says that Bonaparte came to him at 9 p.m. on the 4th, so there was plenty of time if, as I take it, Barras and he began to act as soon as the *Comité* had appointed them and Bonaparte

<sup>1</sup> Jung, *Bonaparte*, iii. 93; Barras, i. 252. Thiébault, who knew Murat, attributes his dispatch to Bonaparte; Thiébault, i. 536.

had reached the Carrousel. Bonaparte, an artilleryman, was pretty sure to think of the guns and may well have known about their position before, as gunners generally care for such things: indeed we know that he had thought of a whiff of grape-shot when Louis XVI was degrading himself by wearing the cap of Liberty before the mob. Barras, if his thoughts went that way, might have called attention to the absence of artillery as soon as the attitude of the Sections was clear; but he did not do so till he met Bonaparte. Lastly, when Barras appeared before the Convention after the repression of the Sections, he said of Bonaparte: 'It is to him, to his wise and prompt dispositions, that is due the defence of the *enceinte*, around which he has distributed the posts with much skill'; whilst Fréron, another Representative, reminded the Convention that Bonaparte had been nominated in the night of the 4th October to replace Menou 'and had only had the morning of the 5th to make the sagacious arrangements whose happy effects you have seen'. Fréron went on to point out that the artilleryman who had done this had just been transferred to the infantry. The real truth appears to be as follows. Barras did play the most important part in one sense: he took the enormous responsibility of making all preparations for firing on the people, a most dangerous thing, which would have led him straight to the scaffold had he been defeated. Also he is probably justified in claiming for himself the order to fire, which no General would have ventured to give. Possessing the confidence of the Jacobins at the moment, and well known in the Capital, he played the important part of figure-head, haranguing the troops and their auxiliaries and convincing them that they were acting under and for the law. The skilful military dispositions were made by the active, thin, half-starved, long-haired General, whose clothes showed his poverty, and who had seemed to Thiébault to be like one of the victims on their way to the scaffold. It is just possible that, once the victory was won, Barras may not at the time have been over-anxious to claim for himself alone the responsibility for the slaughter of citizens of Paris.

There was a curious connexion between Brune and Danican, the leader of the Sections. We have already seen the two on friendly terms at the house of Robespierre in January or February 1794, and Danican professes to have known how Brune was



working against Menou at Prairial. In May 1795 Danican supped at Rouen with Barras, Réal, and Brune, when those worthies were on tour in the ports of the Channel, and Danican believed he had discovered that they meditated a great plan for a Jacobin reaction. On the 3rd October 1795, two days before Vendémiaire, Danican met Brune in the Café Zoppi in Paris; from his conversation Danican believed him to be the 'âme damnée' of the managers of the affair, but he professed to care for neither side. Taking an ice, Brune said: 'Pon my word, in all this I meddle with nothing; I amuse myself in making verses for my wife. You are a fool to have protested against the decree and to have given in your resignation, for the Convention and the Sections are only good to put into a sack and be thrown below the bridges; you will see that the bayonets will end by governing.' This was really very perspicacious of Brune, and he enjoyed the idea, rolling the phrase: 'The government of bayonets', over his tongue with a tone 'sincère et voluptueux'. He did not forget Danican, and on the great day he called at his house with four Dragoons, no doubt to arrest him, but Danican was gone. As for Brune's behaviour during the day, Barras remarks that he had conducted himself well but not as vigorously as Bonaparte, and he chuckles over the new friendship of the two Generals, the tall Brune having to bend low to speak to the tiny Bonaparte. Brune had not long to press the intimacy which was to mean so much to him later, for as a sort of recompense for his conduct Barras soon sent him to accompany the Representative Fréron on a mission to the South, where the Royalists, encouraged by Thermidor, had been having a reaction of their own, killing various patriots, and, what seems really to have shocked the Republicans, even imitating the prison massacres of Paris. Fréron, who had been one of the most violent of the Representatives, was comparatively mild in this office under the new Government, and did little more than parade the country in much pomp with a large force under Brune. He was one of the friends of Bonaparte, and he soon wished to marry Pauline, the youngest sister of the General, but she fell to General Leclerc, one of Fréron's party. I presume that Brune returned to Paris with Fréron in April 1796.

The event of Vendémiaire had a permanent effect on the fortunes of several officers engaged in the defence of the

Convention. Bonaparte soon rose to high command. On the 10th October 1795 he and Barras appeared before the *Comité*, when, as I have said, Barras spoke highly of the General, whom he styled not his A.D.C. but his Chief of the Staff, and he proposed him for the command of the Army of the Interior. Carnot wished to appoint Beaufort de Thorigny, a General said by Barras to have been the most immoral and incapable man in the army. Going before the Convention, Barras proposed Bonaparte as second-in-command, he himself retaining the chief post, and this was consented to. Then on the 16th October Bonaparte was promoted General of Division in the artillery, and on the 26th he replaced Barras in command of the *Armée de l'Intérieur*. This not only brought him into what were riches after his late misery, but also enabled him to pour his advice on the conduct of the war in Italy into the ears of Carnot and other leaders. His plans were undoubtedly good: Schérer refused to carry them out; what more natural than to send Bonaparte to succeed the worn-out Schérer? Also the restless, stirring General was becoming rather an object of suspicion to the Directors, who were already nervous at having any strong General near them. Menou was being tried; Bonaparte naturally was anxious that he should not be condemned for failure in what was a very difficult task, and Barras suspected some deep motive in this. On the 2nd March 1796 Bonaparte received the coveted command of the *Armée d'Italie*.

Now also began the careers of several officers whom Bonaparte was to carry upwards with him. Lieut.-Colonel Murat was, as we have seen, anxious to get out of the ranks of his regiment, and he had applied for the post of commander of the Guard which was to be formed for the Directors. His application was not acceded to, although it was supported by Bonaparte, very warmly according to Barras,<sup>1</sup> though in all probability the application merely passed through his office. Then when Murat heard that Bonaparte was to go to Italy a happy thought struck him: presenting himself to the General he said: 'You have no Colonel as A.D.C.; you ought to have one, and I propose to go with you to fill that post'. This was a piece of effrontery, for Murat had never yet been able to get his rank of Colonel

<sup>1</sup> Barras, ii. 75-6; Lumbroso, A., *Correspondance de Joachim Murat (1793-1808)*, Turin, Roux Frassati, 1899.

recognized, but his poise and confidence pleased Bonaparte and Murat took his first step towards a crown. Bonaparte may also have been pleased at any one wishing to go with him, for Grouchy was not the only officer who held back from Italy when a young untried General was appointed there. The Chief of the Staff to the Armée de l'Intérieur was General Duvigneau; Bonaparte would have taken him but he would not leave Paris (not even when Italy was open to him in October 1796),<sup>1</sup> and the post fell to Berthier, then Chief of the Staff to Kellermann with the Armée des Alpes. Berthier soon shone, whilst Duvigneau disappeared from history. Then Bonaparte remembered Captain Marmont, who had left him for the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', and recalled him to his side again as A.D.C., getting him appointed Lieut.-Colonel on the 8th February 1796. When all was nearly ready, Marmont was sent on to the Armée d'Italie: 'Go,' said his General, 'I shall follow you closely, and in two months we shall be at Turin or be back here again.' In less than two months they were in Milan. Lavalette had seen, but apparently had not become personally acquainted with, his future master, whose orders he had carried. He had been pleased at seeing Bonaparte, when Barras pronounced his eulogium before the Convention, become confused, and repulse with anger those round him who tried to push him to the front. The success of the Convention was not popular with many officers, and Baraguey d'Hilliers voiced his disapproval of the late *coup* so openly that he was dismissed the day after the suppression of the Sections; but, applying to Bonaparte, he got reinstated, and started for La Vendée with his A.D.C. Lavalette, who, however, did not forget the glimpse he had got of Bonaparte.

This, however, is anticipating events, and we must return to Paris. Moncey, who had a local command in the south, visited the Capital in the autumn of 1795 for a short time, and at the end of October General Pérignon, who like Moncey had been serving in the Pyrenees until peace was made this summer, came as a Deputy to the *Conseil des Cinq-Cents*; he remained till February 1796.<sup>2</sup> Hoche, from the Armée de l'Ouest, came about the 19th December to consult with the Directory for the pacification of La Vendée, going back there to command the combined armies

<sup>1</sup> Marmont, i. 96; *Nap. Corr. Inéd.*, Italie, ii. 179.

<sup>2</sup> Phipps, iii, Chapters VIII to XII, describes the French armies in Spain.



on the 1st January 1796. At the end of 1795 General Macdonald, suffering from fever, came to France from the 'Nord', in Holland, and may have been in Paris. Consequently Moncey, Pérignon, and Hoche must have seen Bonaparte, who occupied too high a position (commanding the Armée de l'Intérieur) to be completely ignored, but who to them must have seemed the General of a street broil. It would be interesting to know whether Macdonald saw Bonaparte now: it is not the sort of thing he would mention in his dry Memoirs, but if he did see him, he was certain to have despised him.

In 1796 the movements here have some importance. Jourdan came about the 22nd January to consult with the Government as to the operations of his army, the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', leaving about the 26th February. At the end of February Pérignon, giving up his place in the *Cinq-Cents*, went as Ambassador to Spain, and General Grouchy came on leave from La Vendée, going to the 'Nord' as Chief of the Staff to Beurnonville about the middle of March. Marmont, now Lieut.-Colonel and again A.D.C. to Bonaparte, must have left about the 1st March for Italy; the date he himself gives is a mistake, as that would make him follow, not precede, his General.<sup>1</sup> On the 11th March General Bonaparte, with Colonel Murat and Lieut.-Colonel Junot, left for his new command, the Armée d'Italie. The change in the command of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' brought two other Generals to the Capital. Moreau, coming from his late command, the 'Nord', arrived about the 20th March, and Pichegru, who was handing over to him the command of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', arrived about the end of the month, the two Generals having many consultations with the Government and with one another on the coming campaign before they left for Strasbourg, Moreau about the 20th April and Pichegru a week or so later. If this meeting at Paris had been long planned, one wonders that Bonaparte had not been detained to join in it: the omission shows how little was expected from the Armée d'Italie. Brune, as I have said, probably returned in April 1796 to Paris, where he was again attached to the Armée de l'Intérieur. Always engaged in suppressing internal insurrections, he was one of the officers employed against the Babœuf conspiracy, a Communistic movement which was to have been made in May

<sup>1</sup> Marmont, i. 96, 144-5.

1796, when the five Directors, the commander of the Armée de l'Intérieur, and other notables, were to have been killed, a new Government organized, and all private property suppressed. Rossignol, the former commander of the Armée des Côtes de la Rochelle in La Vendée, but now reduced to seek employment in his old trade of working goldsmith, was engaged in the conspiracy and apparently was intended for the command of the Armée de l'Intérieur. The plot was a most formidable one, but it was revealed to the Directors, who arrested the leaders the day before the rising was to have taken place. Before this the plot had lost one of its main resources. The Directory had formed a body of some 6,000 braves recruited from the 'armée révolutionnaire', which was to guard them under the style of the *Légion de Police*. The conspirators had debauched these men, who became completely uncontrollable and would have been a formidable weapon against the Government; but on the 24th April, at the instance of Carnot, a law had been passed assimilating them to other troops and making them available for service on the frontiers. That was the last place these heroes wished to go to; but Brune was sent with some loyal troops to their barracks, when the worst of them were dismissed and the rest sent to the active armies. On the 10th September 1796 the conspirators made their last effort, at the Camp de Grenelle, which they surprised. Although General Foissac le Tour commanded there, Brune took a prominent part with the troops which crushed this revolt. As for Rossignol, he was tried but acquitted.

The Armée d'Italie soon showed that its operations would influence those of the other armies. At the beginning of May 1796 first Colonel Murat and then Lieut.-Colonel Junot arrived with the flags taken in the Montenotte campaign, the first arrivals of what became a regular stream of A.D.C.s and Generals bringing tangible records of victory to Paris.<sup>1</sup> I presume that General Macdonald must have heard the news of these successes before, recovered for the time from his illness, he left to rejoin the 'Nord' in May; but he may not have been in Paris. Hoche came from La Vendée, probably before the 12th July, to consult about the projected expedition to Ireland, to prepare for which

<sup>1</sup> For further particulars of these missions to Paris see the earlier chapters of this volume.

he left again for Brest about the 21st. On the 27th August Dutailis from Italy presented to the Directory the trophies of the campaign of Castiglione, and on the 1st October Lieut.-Colonel Marmont brought the twenty-two colours taken in the Roveredo campaign, returning to Italy as Colonel in time for Arcola. It probably was just before this triumph of the Armée d'Italie that poor Jourdan came to Paris after his unfortunate retreat in Germany.<sup>1</sup> The long advance of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' into Germany had promised to continue his prestige and to keep his command on a level with that of Bonaparte. Now all had been ruined by the fault of Moreau, and Jourdan, patriotic as he was, must have winced at the tale of repeated success in Italy. Indeed on the very last days of the year an A.D.C. of Bonaparte, Captain Lemarrois, laid before the Directory the trophies of Arcola. About the end of November General Clarke was sent from Paris to Italy on a mission to Bonaparte. It was almost impossible for any General to keep away from the frontiers any longer, and in September 1796 Brune's patron, Barras, now one of the five Directors, had him sent, with his rank of General of Brigade, to the Armée d'Italie, where Bonaparte received him well, not only as a protégé of Barras but also as one of the Revolutionary party, whose favour the rising commander always tried to win. So far Brune's career had been one of shame; whilst others were fighting the foe on the frontiers he had been used in the interior, for his short service in Belgium seems to have been only in the Supply departments, where he was linked with such men as Ronsin and joined in the devilish work of denouncing Generals. Grouchy also had been employed against insurgents, but the Vendéans were no foe to be slighted, whilst Brune's opponents had been mere sheep for the slaughter. Still, he delighted in his work, and the remembrance of these times and of the men he had met was dear to him. He was thirty-three when he really began war. How the wretched experience he had had could have enabled him to serve at once in such an army as that of 'Italie' is one of the marvels of his history.<sup>2</sup>

The year 1797 was a memorable one for Paris, as the great victories of Bonaparte in Italy, and then the armistice in April, brought his Generals here one by one; also the *coup d'état* of

<sup>1</sup> Phipps, ii, Chapter XV.

<sup>2</sup> See Phipps, i, for Brune's early career.



Fructidor began the interference of the army with the Government. Early in January Lefebvre came from the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', perhaps to join a fresh expedition to Ireland, proposed by Hoche after the failure of that to Bantry Bay. Hoche himself came from La Rochelle about the 20th January, and on the 21st he and Lefebvre were presented to the President of the Directory; the complaints made by Lefebvre at this time should be read to understand not only the feeling of the armies against the Government but also the growth of their independence, which made them, long so submissive, now speak out most openly:<sup>1</sup> a sign of the feeling which made Fructidor possible. Both these Generals left for the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', which Hoche now was to command and which he reached about the 23rd February. On the 18th February the Directory received Lieut.-Colonel Bessières, coming from Italy with the colours taken at Rivoli and La Favorita; Bessières soon left again for Italy. On the 1st March Augereau, making his first appearance as General in the Capital, presented to the Directory the colours taken in Mantua, and after having his time of triumph he left, about the 8th April, for Milan. Macdonald probably came here in March from the Armée du Nord, leaving early in, or before, April. It is now time to consider more closely the events leading up to the *coup d'état* of Fructidor.

<sup>1</sup> Phipps, ii. 407-8. He complained of the journalists, and quoted Marceau: 'The only thing left for Generals who wish to be respected is to die, and the Republican Generals decided to get themselves killed, or resign'. Barras, ii. 297-8.

## XIII

### MANŒUVRING FOR POSITION

(April to September 1797)

Opposition to the Directory. The Triumvirate. Attitude of the armies.  
Augereau's arrival. Influence of Pichegru on the Opposition.

For Contemporary Events see under Chapter VIII.

THE *coup d'état* of the 18<sup>ème</sup> Fructidor An V (4th September 1797) was an event very important for my subject, not so much from the actual number of future Marshals actively connected with it, but because it marked a complete change in the relations of the army with the nation. Hitherto subservient to the ruling power in Paris, the army now made its voice heard and obeyed in the Capital. This will be better understood after giving the history of the *coup*. The rule of the Directory, established in 1795, had caused great discontent in the nation. The Constitution of 1795 was a difficult one to work,<sup>1</sup> for the two Councils, the *Anciens* and the *Cinq-Cents*, had no real check on the Executive; and the sort of committee formed by the Directory was not a body likely to be able to follow a consecutive policy or to give France the organization which she required. Unwilling to have the attention of the nation called to its failures at home, the Directory thought its safety lay in continuing war, which also gave it funds. The nation longed for peace abroad and at home, and for the end of the anarchy and confusion which reigned in the country to such an extent that 127,000 troops had to be kept in France itself. A majority of the two Councils, representing a growing majority in the nation, was in favour of a change, and this party tended to increase in both Councils as the original two-thirds of the members drawn from the Convention were gradually replaced by new elections. In the spring of 1797 this party, which I style the Opposition, was in the minority in the Directory; but as the *Anciens* had the nominations for vacancies it had the possibility of obtaining a majority if the lot, by which the Directors retired in turn, were favour-

<sup>1</sup> For a brief description of the Constitution see *ante*, p. 256, and Pierre, *Fructidor*, 74.

able to it by falling on one of the majority. The Directors were Barras, Larévellière-Lépeaux, Rewbell, Carnot, and Letourneur, the two last being the Opposition members. However, they lost this chance, as the lot for exclusion fell on one of their sympathizers in the Directory, Letourneur; and so, although they elected a friend, Barthélemy,<sup>1</sup> they still had only two Directors against three. These three, Barras, Larévellière-Lépeaux, and Rewbell, generally known as the Triumvirate, were determined not to allow power to escape from their party of the Revolution, and were ready for any extremity. Their discussions were often stormy enough. Barras, who hated Carnot, once broke out at him, telling him he was a vile scoundrel who had sold the Republic and wished to cut the throats of those who defended it. 'There is not a louse on your body which would not have the right to spit in your face!'

The Opposition, strongest in the *Anciens*, growing in the *Cinq-Cents*, and having the support of the greater part of the nation, held a formidable position. The Councils had a Guard of 1,500 men under a trusted commander, Ramel, supplied by Moreau, who, with Desaix, was in communication with the Opposition and was gradually supplying dependable men to replace others in the Guard. They also hoped for support from the National Guard of Paris, so they should have been reasonably safe from any stroke tried against them. Unfortunately they were themselves hopelessly divided, otherwise, as time was on their side, they might have triumphed. The Royalist party had been steadily growing in France and had been very successful at the last elections—almost too much so, indeed, for they had not been careful enough to nominate only moderate men, and amongst them appeared as leaders such men as the active and daring General Willot,<sup>2</sup> and Pichegru, who still had some prestige. Since his removal from the command of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' in March 1796, Pichegru had been living in retirement at the dismantled Abbey of Belleveaux, in the Department of Doubs, which he had bought. The Royalists were preparing for a

<sup>1</sup> François Barthélemy (1747–1830). Ambassador under the *ancien régime*; negotiated the treaties of peace between the Republic and Prussia and Spain in 1795. Count under the Empire, Marquis under the Second Restoration. Michaud, *Biog. Univ.*, lvii. 231–242; *Biog. Cont.* i. 257–8.

<sup>2</sup> Général Amédée Willot (1757–1823). Phipps, iii. 211–212. He had served with 'Pyrénées Occidentales', and in La Vendée.



Restoration, if it were only by getting Louis XVIII elected as permanent President of the Directory, and, being in too great a hurry, they showed themselves too prominently; for example, in May 1797 Pichegru was chosen as President of the *Cinq-Cents*, and another of their men, Barbé-Marbois, for the same post in the *Anciens*. Now many members of the Councils who were strongly opposed to the Triumvirate were also firm supporters of the Republic, and some of them were regicides who looked with alarm on the idea of any Restoration, as, having the precedent in England before them, they believed that they would never be forgiven. Carnot was one of these regicides, so that a Restoration to him meant not only loss of power and position but also personal danger. 'Say that in our place you would have done the same,' asked some regicides of their allies, seeking to get a pledge, but this the Royalists could not give.

The change in the dress and habits of the better class in the Capital may have alarmed the 'patriots'. An English visitor describes the alteration he noticed in two months at the end of 1796, and matters had progressed since then. The *belles*, the *beaux*, and those whom he cruelly, but with some truth, describes as the 'dastardly "honnêtes gens"', had ceased to live in terror of their lives and once more appeared in civilized fashion: 'The quantity of handsome carriages which have just appeared; the sight of servants again getting up behind them and being better dressed; *abbés* and others walking "chapeau bas", the men more elegantly and the women more richly clothed, strike my eyes. . . . I have for the first time seen a *vinaigrette*' (that is a sedan-chair upon two wheels), 'horses being scarce.'<sup>1</sup> In February 1797 Madame Laborde had begun to dress her servants in livery. All this might shock the patriots, much as the worthy man in America who wrote to his friend in the West, from the city he was visiting in the East, 'Respectability stalks the streets unchecked.' The Triumvirate also had the support of those who profited by the system of disorder which they represented. The Revolution had a very shady side in its finances; and the sale of the confiscated estates of the *émigrés*, the contracts for the supply of the armies, and other transactions, had given ample opportunity for plunder. All those who

<sup>1</sup> Swinburne, H., *The Courts of Europe at the close of the last century*, 2 vols., London, Nichols, 1895. See vol. ii, pp. 165, 183.

profited by this were eager to prevent the establishment of a Government which would be able and willing to regulate such matters and to inquire into and punish all abuses. How much was amiss can be shown by one instance. Jourdan, now a member of the *Cinq-Cents*, declared in that Council: 'For two years I commanded 150,000 men: well, I never received more than 10,000 rations a day; I was forced to procure the rest for the army from the country in which it lived; and yet the Treasury always paid the 150,000 rations into the hands of the public blood-suckers, the vampires, who devour the substance of the people, and whose excessive fortunes and scandalous luxury attest their infamy.' Well may Sciout style Jourdan 'ce jacobin stupide' for supporting the very men to whom much of this was due. The power of this horde of plunderers was strengthened by the fact that so many Generals, especially in Italy, were either participators in the gains or practised on their own account; and even when commanders, like Bonaparte, had clean hands themselves, they had no wish to see so strict a supervision of accounts as would prevent them showering the largesse on their followers which they thought their due, and which gave them so much power. As Consul and Emperor Napoleon fought, with varying success, against this system of plunder, and much of the opposition and ill will he met with in his later years, which contributed so much to his fall, was due to the fears and resentment of the men at whom he had struck.

Whilst so many powerful men felt the rope tighten round their necks at the idea of a Restoration, or of any change of Government, the Opposition had the incredible folly of making themselves an enemy in the person of the most powerful man in France. Some twelve members of the two Councils, not strictly Royalists so much as desirous of a good Government, had formed themselves into a sort of committee, which included three of the future Ministers of Napoleon, Lebrun, Portalis, and Barbé-Marbois. Two of this party chose to attack, or at least to criticize, Bonaparte, just at the moment when his triumphs in Italy had made him a popular hero and the paymaster of the Directory. General Mathieu Dumas,<sup>1</sup> usually sane enough,

<sup>1</sup> Général Comte Guillaume-Mathieu Dumas (1753-1837). *Pair de France* in 1831, under Louis-Philippe. Employed by Napoleon on his staff and as Minister of War to Joseph Bonaparte at Naples; a military writer. He is not

before the opening of the campaign of 1797 had published a pamphlet entitled: *Résultat des dernières campagnes*, in which, after what the worthy man calls 'des réflexions qui parurent assez profondes', on the new system of war, he asserted that it was time to stop and to offer peace on terms favourable to the Allies. This was on the lines on which Carnot wanted to act later, and which the Triumvirate bitterly opposed as a sort of treason. Part of the General's profound reflections was a criticism of Bonaparte for not having done more. Possibly because he was much occupied with his wife, Bonaparte took this mildly, and only entrusted his A.D.C. Marmont with the task of replying, which was done to his satisfaction. Another of the committee, Dumolard,<sup>1</sup> went farther. A wordy orator, he attacked the policy of the Directory in seizing Venice and Genoa and threatening Switzerland. He was right enough in his denunciations, but clearer-sighted members of his party, Mathieu Dumas himself and others, members of the Club de Clichy, saw that, though aimed at the Directory, the blow must be felt by Bonaparte, who had been the instrument, if not the originator, of the policy in Italy. They tried to dissuade their colleague, but how stop a man of words who believes he has a good theme, whatever be the result to his party or his country? On the 23rd June 1797 Dumolard spoke in the *Cinq-Cents*, trying to limit his blame to the Directory, and praising the army, but not inserting any of those personal praises of Bonaparte to which that General was accustomed. Mathieu Dumas then tried to repair the mistake by praise of the 'Alexandre français', who as General and as soldier had brought his glory to its height. Berthier, Masséna, Augereau—'tous ces hommes, à la fois grenadiers et généraux', were also lauded, with Hoche and Moreau, poor Jourdan apparently being forgotten. All this was in vain: the Triumvirate at once treated the attack as made on the army, and the Generals were in no mood to bear the slightest criticism.

Bonaparte received the news of the action of Dumolard with a scream of wrath, ending in an angry wail. Remembering the to be confused with the Général Alexandre Dumas, father of the great Alexandre, whom we have lately seen in the Armée d'Italie.

<sup>1</sup> Jacques-Victor Dumolard (1766-1819), escaped from being in the first batch of those transported after Fructidor, but was banished to Oléron. Michaud, *Biog. Univ.* lxi. 123-8.



submission of the army towards any member of the Convention, it is well to mark the high line he took: 'I had no reason to expect that a manifesto signed and inspired by an *émigré*, and paid for by England, should receive more credit in the *Conseil des Cinq-Cents* than the evidence of 80,000 men, or than my own.' Denounced, persecuted, decried in every way, he requested to be allowed to resign; it was necessary for him to live tranquilly, if the daggers of Clichy would let him live. Then this unfortunate General proceeded to tune the voice of his army, and there could be no doubt of his meaning. He knew, he told his soldiers, how they were affected by the dangers which threatened their country, but they were the same men who had triumphed over the coalition of Europe. 'Mountains separate us from France; you will cross them with the rapidity of the eagle, if it be necessary, to maintain the Constitution, to defend Liberty, to protect the Government and the Republicans.' Then came the turn of his Generals. On the 18th July he sent to the Directory addresses from the divisions of Masséna and of Augereau, each bearing 12,000 signatures and speaking plainly enough. That of Masséna asked whether the road to Paris offered more obstacles than the road to Vienna, whilst that of Augereau, deficient in its spelling, told the Royalists to: 'Tremble! From the Adige to the Rhine, from the Rhine to the Seine, is only one step. Tremble! your iniquities are full, and their price is at the end of our bayonets.' The Light Infantry in Lombardy put the point on the 'i's', saying that the returned Royalists and the 'horde impie' of priests organized civil war: 'Their arsenal is in the bosom of the *Corps Législatif*.' Recruited from the hot-headed population of the south, the officers and men of the original Armée d'Italie required no urging on this matter; but it was different with Bernadotte, who remained silent until Bonaparte pointed out to him that if he did not join in it would be said that he differed from the other Generals. Then he did issue an address, but even then his offer of the same arms that had served the national independence and the same chiefs who had led the republican phalanxes, to make the enemies of the State and of Liberty disappear, was conditional: 'If conspirators have formed the plan of laying sacrilegious hands on the Government', a point on which the others had no doubts. Hoche and his army of the

'Sambre-et-Meuse' joined in gladly enough. The 'Rhin-et-Moselle' alone remained silent, according to its excellent habit of not meddling with politics, and Moreau kept the firebrands in it quiet.<sup>1</sup>

Bonaparte had plenty of information from Paris. About the 23rd April, as we have seen, Masséna had been sent there with the ratification by the Emperor of the treaty of Leoben. Well received as the General had been, still, Mermet, whom Hoche had sent with colours taken in the last campaign, was also welcomed on the same occasion, and Letourneur was thought to have spoken more highly of the victories on the Rhine than of those in Italy. After staying six weeks in Paris Masséna rejoined Bonaparte on the 12th July at Milan, and explained to him his views, which were favourable to the Triumvirate and which may have made Bonaparte the warmer in his address to his army. Masséna himself had been mentioned in Paris for the vacancy amongst the Directors which was caused by the retirement of Letourneur in May, but, wisely enough, he had no wish for that post. The anger of Bonaparte and his threats were no mere question of words, and he seriously considered a march on Paris with 25,000 men. Fortunately he had better advisers than Masséna. Sérurier returned from Paris early in August 1797, and, considering his character, his views were hardly likely to be very favourable to the Triumvirate. On the 11th July Bonaparte also despatched his A.D.C. Lavalette,<sup>2</sup> to see every one, keep aloof from all parties, and to tell him the truth devoid of all passion. For this work Lavalette was well fitted. Originally a member of the Royalist, or rather the Constitutional party, one of the defenders of the Tuileries on the 10th August 1792, he was little likely to sympathize with the extreme Revolutionary party, whose language had early disgusted him. He found Barras thinking of nothing but hatred of his opponents, whom he meant to strike heavily; and wanting money for the contemplated *coup*, for there was little secret about what was to be done by the Triumvirate, who intended to proscribe those members of the Councils who were opposed to them. Carnot, the Director from whom most was expected on the Opposition side, was unsatisfactory, and explained the difficulties

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Cyr, *Rhin-et-Moselle*, iv. 202-3. Phipps, ii. 445-6.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 184, note 1, for mistake over date.

of his position. He was opposed to the party that wished to govern France as if it were a club, and he knew that the country was tired of the Revolutionary system, but he dreaded the efforts of the Royalists, and the more so as he knew Pichegru to be a traitor.<sup>1</sup> But his policy was only to make light of the acts of both sides; and he chose to describe the men who were marching resolutely to their end as Don Quixotes. Writing to Bonaparte himself about the general alarm, he represented both parties as suffering from nightmare and as arming to attack windmills, but said that matters were clearing: 'Fear has made the evil, fear will be the remedy.' Then with extraordinary fatuity he told the ambitious General, of whose idea of marching on Paris he had obviously heard, that a thousand absurd projects were attributed to him by those who could not believe that a man who had done such great things could reduce himself to live as a simple citizen. 'Quant à moi, je crois qu'il n'y a que Bonaparte redevenu simple citoyen qui puisse laisser voir le général Bonaparte dans toute sa grandeur.' And this to Bonaparte, of all men!

The General's position became clear. From the triumph of the Opposition he had at best to expect obscurity, if not, as he believed, disgrace and arrest. The march on Paris to make himself master of the situation was not so easy. Whenever the troops moved in France desertion on an enormous scale took place, as we have seen in the case of those sent east and west from the Pyrenees in 1795.<sup>2</sup> Carnot believed that such movements involved the loss of from one-half to two-thirds of the men. The march would take a month, during which time the Opposition might get support not only in the Capital but also from Moreau and the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', whilst Hoche, although as much opposed to the Royalists as was Bonaparte, might forestall the march from his own army, in his own interest. Peace was but half made, and Italy, so dearly won, would be lost. Further, he distrusted the Triumvirate. Lavalette urged him not to tarnish his glory by becoming involved in the unjust violence meditated against the Councils, which would be long remembered and resented; and probably he himself was very dubious as to how far the movement, once started, might not go. In the end he did not move; he withheld the money he had

<sup>1</sup> Lavalette, i, pt. ii, 34-5; Carnot, *Réponse*, 159-61.    <sup>2</sup> Phipps, iii. 256.



offered and which Lavalette had the power to remit ; and eventually he even ceased to correspond with the Directory, much to the alarm and resentment of the Triumvirate.

Bonaparte not being available, the Triumvirate turned to Hoche, who at once threw himself into their cause. His army was almost as excited as that of Italy, and was far nearer the Capital, whilst its old commander, Jourdan, was at Paris, a member of the *Conseil des Cinq-Cents* and a strong supporter of the Triumvirate. Hoche himself had long feared lest a counter-revolution might be made at Paris, and had no scruple as to employing force against the Opposition in the *Corps Législatif*. By an arrangement made with Barras alone, Hoche took advantage of an order from the Minister of Marine telling him to take command of a fresh expedition to Ireland and to assemble a force of from 8,000 to 10,000 men at Brest. In reality there were plenty of troops of all arms in the West for this purpose, but Hoche, professing to believe that there was only enough infantry to guard the coast, and no cavalry or artillery, ordered Lemoine to march, nominally on Brest, but in reality on Paris, with an infantry division of 6,000 men, Richepanse's Chasseur division of from 2,000 to 3,000 horse, and 1,000 artillery with 24 guns, whilst a much larger force was to follow. Lemoine accordingly started on the 9th July. The Minister of War knew nothing of these movements ; and suddenly on the 19th July the Opposition discovered that Richepanse's cavalry was about to arrive at La Ferté Alais, that is, within the radius which the wisdom of the Constitution forbade the troops to enter. Meantime, in spite of the opposition of Carnot and Barthélemy, the Triumvirate had nominated Hoche as Minister of War on the 16th July, and two days later that General reached Paris, believing he could deliver the proposed *coup* at once. Instead he found all in disorder, for the Opposition was alarmed, and Barras, who alone amongst the Directors knew the secret, was unwilling to take the responsibility for the movement. Carnot, who was for the moment President of the Directory, in reality fully understood the significance of the approach of the troops, and when Hoche appeared before the Directory he pressed him severely for his reasons, as he did later in a private interview. Hoche, he said, knew that there were 43,000 men along the coast ; and why did he bring so much cavalry ?

Barras kept his eyes fixed on a paper in front of him, not responding to the appealing glances of the General, who could only reply that these were regiments devoted to himself. Larévellière-Lépeaux and Rewbell were not in the secret, but, suspecting how the matter stood, Larévellière-Lépeaux undertook the support of the General. At last Hoche withdrew confounded, and after interviews with Carnot, Larévellière-Lépeaux, and Barras, he left Paris, utterly disgusted but still determined to lend his support to the Triumvirate. Then the Opposition had discovered that he was not yet thirty, the age required for Ministers by the Constitution. The illegality of the appointment was incontestable, and Hoche had to profess to his army that it was with 'la joie la plus pure' that he renounced alike the Ministry and the maritime expedition, to return to the bosom of an army which had given him such proofs of confidence. The first attempt at a *coup d'état* had failed most ludicrously.

The Triumvirate, though doubtful of one another's intentions, were in no way abashed by their first failure; indeed, nothing is more curious than the insolence of their attitude towards the Councils. They had known the illegality of their appointment of Hoche to the Ministry of War, but they meant it to show the army that Carnot was no longer the ruler in military matters. They had scarcely tried to conceal the purpose of the troops' march on Paris: had this force really been intended for Brest, it had only to continue its march, keeping clear of the Capital, to prove the good faith of those concerned; but once the alarm was given the troops were ordered back to their army. Carnot, always now endeavouring to build golden bridges for the retreat of his opponents, who only meant to advance, argued that the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' could not afford to furnish so many troops—15,117 according to the Minister of War—for the West, and that the same argument held good against sending even the original number selected by Hoche; but the Triumvirate voted that the 9,000 men should continue their march to Brest. This, however, was a mere blind; and after a number of orders and counter-orders Lemoine was ordered on the 23rd July to collect his troops in the Department of the Marne, placing himself at Rheims, ready to march, again nominally on Brest but really on Paris. The way in which the men had been exhausted by

their marches offered a convenient pretext for this halt. It was apparently on the same principle of shutting his eyes to facts that Carnot on the 26th July signed an order by the Directory approving Hoche's original dispatch of 9,000 men: a measure he knew to have been directed against himself. As for the rest of the Opposition, they remained much in the attitude of a sheep which, seeing the knife removed for a moment from its throat, watches the butcher with uneasy interest whilst he sharpens his blade for a better stroke. The attempts to organize properly the Guard of the Councils and to prepare the National Guard were but feebly made. A few men were ready for violent measures, and at least two offers to make away with their enemies were proposed but rejected. Young Gérard Lacuée, nephew of the future Minister of Napoleon, was ready to stab Barras, but Carnot was too honourable to do anything but try to calm his friend. A more formidable proposal was made to General Mathieu Dumas by a Colonel of the National Guard, who had one hundred men ready to attack the Luxembourg, overpower the guard there, and slay Barras and Rewbell, and perhaps Larevellière-Lépeaux if he could be reached in his more distant quarters. But Mathieu Dumas only dissuaded him from the attempt. In later days Napoleon, hearing something of this, made the General recount the whole affair, and then remarked, 'You were an imbecile; you understand nothing about revolutions.' We shall find Pichegru rejecting a similar proposal. One measure the sluggish Opposition did take in their own protection against any fresh advance of Hoche's troops, for they ordered columns to be raised on every road leading to Paris, at the distance of twelve leagues, inscribed: 'Limite constitutionnelle des troupes', with the articles of the laws prohibiting and punishing any crossing of the boundary. If they really did believe that this warning would be respected, their faith was justified in one way, for it is said that when the troops again advanced, anxious to keep within the text of the law, they carried the posts before them.

Barras now turned once more to Bonaparte, and, without the knowledge of his colleagues, asked for a General to carry out the *coup* he meditated. Bonaparte chose Augereau, who he thought at the moment to be in his interests; but at the same time he wrote to Lavalette in Paris telling him not to trust the



General, for he was factious and had brought disorder into the army. Leaving 'Italie' on the 27th July, Augereau passed through Chambéry, the head-quarters of Kellermann's Armée des Alpes, when the enthusiastic patriots went out to meet him, accompanied by the officers and the regimental bands. Kellermann, a stiff old officer of the *ancien régime*, had naturally objected to this, and had thus offended the conceit of Augereau, who believed he had saved the army of Italy and was now about to save France. The local patriots also had their grievances against Kellermann, and Augereau arrived in Paris full of accusations against the old General. On the 19th August he wrote to Bonaparte: 'The various complaints that have been made against General Kellermann and the officers of his staff are a sure guarantee that he does much harm in his quality of Commander-in-Chief. The Directory, struck by the veracious account which my honour and love of my country have dictated to me, is about to decree the suppression of the Armée des Alpes and its union with that of "Italie".' This decree was issued on the 21st August, and Kellermann, passing to the command of the 7th Military Division at Lyons, learnt how dangerous it was to offend a General of the Armée d'Italie. No doubt Bonaparte was glad to get rid of the complications caused by the existence of two armies in the same theatre, but he cannot have had much real complaint against Kellermann. Indeed, he had often expressed appreciation of Kellermann's efforts to supply him with troops, as when he wrote on the 15th June 1796, praising the appearance of some troops just received: 'They do honour to you personally.' With success Bonaparte had grown more openly dictatorial; as he said: 'From the time I commanded I recognized neither limits nor laws.' Doubtless the Armée des Alpes was no longer of use, but one feels sorry that it should be the swaggering Augereau who pushed the winner of Valmy from command. Finding himself an object of suspicion, Kellermann published the defence he had made to the Directory, and Bonaparte, in acknowledging the receipt of a copy, wrote in the most complimentary terms of him. Still, Lyons was one of the places whence the Armée d'Italie drew its supplies, and, always grasping on that point, he chose to believe that Kellermann hampered his plans. The Directory gave way, and on the 21st October 1797 Kellermann was placed on

the unemployed list, the Directory writing to Bonaparte: 'Le général Kellermann a eu sa réforme. Il n'est plus employé, et ne peut pas contrarier ou retarder l'exécution de vos plans.'

Augereau reached Paris and was received by the Directory on the 5th August, and on the 8th he was appointed to command the Military Division of Paris. Barras and Rewbell wished to keep his arrival secret, but this was overruled by Larevellière-Lépeaux and he was received in public. Nominally he came only on private business, but Bonaparte took the opportunity of sending the original petitions of the army, of which it will be remembered that that of Augereau's own division was far the most violent. Augereau himself made no secret of his intentions: he had come to kill the Royalists and he wanted five or six heads, that of Pichegru amongst them. Even before the Directory he declared that the heroes of the Armée d'Italie would not suffer the Royalists to make a counter-revolution: the 12,000 braves he commanded were ready to march against them. When he had appeared before the Directory in February, Rewbell, struck by his appearance, exclaimed: 'Quel fier brigand!' Now, with his uniform covered with gold, his fingers loaded with rings, tall and imposing, he was a splendid specimen of a military bully. Always a swaggerer, he was loud in his own praises. On his last visit he told Barras that it had been treachery on the part of Bonaparte to raise the siege of Mantua before Castiglione, where he, the great Augereau, had beaten the enemy. Now he explained to Carnot, probably not a sympathetic listener, that it was he alone who had directed affairs in Italy. Bonaparte might some day make a good General, but wanted experience: he had even seen him almost lose his head on delicate occasions; it was he, Augereau, who restored his confidence and had got him out of many awkward places.

The return of Augereau so soon after he had been in the Capital had alarmed not only the Royalists but also two of the Triumvirate, Larevellière-Lépeaux and Rewbell, who were not in the secret and who suspected some plot of Barras against them. The fervour of the General presented a danger to these two Directors, who had no wish for a rising of the *faubourgs* of the Capital, or a movement whose end they could not foresee; so Larévellière-Lépeaux set himself to calm the too fiery General, flattering his vanity whilst insisting on the necessity of avoid-

ing bloodshed—always, I presume, if no resistance were attempted. One can imagine Augereau's pleasure when told that he was a General with a noble soul, elevated, master of himself, full of generous sentiments, knowing that the height of glory was to unite moderation and humanity to the honour of a triumph! Barras also gave up his wish for heads. A mild notice that any one recalling Royalty, the Constitution of 1793, or the name of Orléans, would be shot, was placarded as a proof of the moderation of the Triumvirate. In the meantime Hoche was to furnish the money and also the men. No troops from Italy were used, although their presence is often asserted. Possibly this wrong idea may have been caused by the large number of officers and soldiers, either unemployed or dismissed from the service, who were in the Capital, and many of whom may have come from Italy. Several of the Ministers had been changed, Schérer becoming Minister of War on the 25th July, while on the 19th Talleyrand, delighted at the prospect of making a large fortune, had become Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Suddenly Bernadotte appeared from Italy, and was received by the Directory on the 27th August. Writing on the 9th August, Bonaparte nominally sent him with the remainder of the colours taken at Rivoli, which should have gone with Bessières but had been left by mistake at Peschiera. Bonaparte must have known well how opposed to each other Augereau and Bernadotte were, but he distrusted both the Directory and Augereau and wanted some other watcher, even besides Lavalette, to be present at the Capital in his interests. Augereau understood, and was annoyed. On the 24th August he wrote to Bonaparte that Bernadotte had arrived three days before and had been received with demonstrations of surprise and fear (meaning apparently by the Opposition), although he had seen Pichegru, Kléber, and the Minister of War, Schérer. 'I do not know the motive which has brought him to Paris, or whether he will stay here long; the patriots are pleased to see him, and I myself take pleasure in believing that he will justify by his conduct the good opinion that they have conceived of him.' To Barras he was more explicit: 'Bonaparte has done himself much harm by the praises which he has given to Bernadotte and Sérurier. It was imprudent to send Bernadotte to Paris at the same time as Augereau' (for the great man spoke of himself in the third



person—as indeed Kléber also was accustomed to do); ‘Bonaparte knows well that there is only he in Italy and I in Paris who can save the country.’ Bernadotte, according to his wont at critical moments in political affairs, would have liked to keep himself unattached to either side. As Augereau said, he had seen Pichegru at the house of Kléber, with several Generals of the ‘Nord’, and he seems to have grasped the position very well. Pichegru, he wrote to Bonaparte, was put forward and flattered by one party, but in reality he was a very ordinary man and not a strong one, who was every day losing some of his ‘colossal reputation’, whilst believing that his name was worth an army. On the other hand, Bernadotte believed that if the two parties came to blows the confusion would be terrible, and it would not be possible for those who directed it to master it, a fear which was much in the heart of Larévellière-Lépeaux too. He must have seen a good deal of Jourdan, but of him he says nothing, perhaps thinking the subject not pleasant to Bonaparte. He had seen Carnot and found that Director quite ready to reinforce Bonaparte if war were to be continued. Last and best, ‘Paris est un séjour horrible pour l’homme d’honneur’; he was already sick to death of it and would soon start back for Italy.

All this did not at all suit the Triumvirate, who were determined that, in appearance at least, he should belong to them, and to implicate him with their plot they gave him the warmest of welcomes. He presented the colours he had brought with the ‘modesty and propriety which have always distinguished him’, and Larévellière-Lépeaux, now President of the Directory, received him effusively and spoke in a manner which showed that he himself and his supporters were ready for any extreme. ‘Would posterity believe that there were men who asked for a master, and demanded fetters for the hands of those who wished to be free? There shall be no fetters for brave men!’ he cried in a paroxysm of enthusiasm, throwing himself, all tears, into Bernadotte’s arms. Then he asked the General to dine the next day, and Barras did the same for the day after, both saying they counted on him. ‘Bernadotte était, si l’on peut ainsi dire, bloqué,’ and the Triumvirate grinned at one another as he found it impossible to refuse. With his hand thus partly forced, Bernadotte had to appear on the side of the Triumvirate; but he had great doubts as to the results of any disturbance, and

he was probably much in the same mind as Bonaparte at the moment in fearing lest they should be obliged to clothe the Triumvirate with 'une puissance consulaire', and to dispense with the Councils temporarily. The country, he said, seemed like a young horse, jumping and bounding after being kept too long in the stable. At the same time he was firm in his language of devotion to Bonaparte. He laughed at the men who believed that they could operate a counter-revolution and enchain the armies: 'These Deputies who speak with so much impertinence are far from imagining that we would subjugate Europe, if you wished to form such a project.' The letter ends: 'Adieu, General, enjoy yourself thoroughly; do not poison your existence by melancholy reflections; the Republicans have their eyes on you, they press your image to their hearts; the Royalists regard it with respect, and tremble; my friendship for you is unchanging.' This is pretty well for a General of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'.

The distribution of the future Marshals and of the Generals with whom we are concerned, at the moment of the *coup d'état* of Fructidor, may be of some interest, so I give it, only stating the rank of any one when it is below that of General of Division. Taking first those away from Paris and with the armies: Grouchy was at Nantes, in command of the local division, the 12th, part of the 'Quatres Divisions Réunies' under Hédouville. Macdonald was on the Rhine in command of the two divisions of the Armée du Nord which had been acting with the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' in the last campaign. We know nothing of their personal opinions, but Grouchy was probably in favour of the Triumvirate and Macdonald indifferent to either party. Lefebvre, the two Generals of Brigade Soult and Ney, with Colonel Mortier, who was commanding a cavalry regiment, were with the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' on the right bank of the Rhine, Soult leading a brigade in Championnet's division and Ney having the Hussar division of the army. We know nothing of Mortier's opinions, but in all probability he agreed with the violent support that the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' gave to the Triumvirate, acting in combination with their old commander Jourdan. Hoche, their present commander, wasting away and very near to death, was ready to go to any extreme in support of the Triumvirate. We may assume that all the 'Italie' contingent, as far as they

cared for politics, were also supporters of the Triumvirate, although Bonaparte himself was anxious lest a victory over the Opposition should be pushed too far. While the two armies of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' and 'Italie' were ardent and loud in their support of the Triumvirate and in their threats against the Opposition, the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', placed 'à cheval' on the Rhine, kept a marked and even threatening silence. Moreau was in command, with Saint-Cyr leading a division, and the two Generals of Brigade Davout and Oudinot. It was not that the army had any Royalist leanings, but it had always kept itself free from politics; as we have seen, it had not joined in the addresses sent by the other armies, and when some firebrands had wished to copy the example set on either flank, Moreau restrained them: considering the temper of his army he could hardly have done otherwise. The cold Saint-Cyr, for one, would have strongly resented any attempt to get an address from him, and dissension in the army on such a subject would have gone far. Moreau himself was in a most difficult position, for a suspicion of Royalism always hung about him since the army had captured the *fourgon* of the *émigré* General Klingin,<sup>1</sup> in which was a correspondence showing that Pichegru, the friend of Moreau, had been in traitorous communication with the enemy when he had been in command of the army in 1795, and Moreau's own name was mentioned as one of whom the Royalists had hopes. The documents were in cipher, but were gradually being made clear; and whilst the Chief of the Staff, Reynier, and also Desaix, knew what had happened, Moreau kept silence as yet towards the Directory. Desaix, as we have seen, had temporarily left this army and gone to visit Bonaparte in Italy, very fortunately for himself as it turned out. Three other Generals were in the south, Pérignon as ambassador at Madrid, Moncey in command of the local division, the 11th, at Bayonne, and Kellermann of the 7th at Lyons: all three were probably neutral.

In the Capital itself were Augereau, Bernadotte, Jourdan, Kléber, and Pichegru, and we must deal with these at greater length. Augereau came from the Armée d'Italie, Jourdan and Kléber from the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'; Bernadotte might now be

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondance trouvée le 2 Floréal An V à Offembourg dans les fourgons du général Klingin*, Paris, Pluviose An VI, 2 vols.



said to have ties with each of those armies, but he had thrown in his lot with 'Italie'. Pichegru came from the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'. Of these, the attitude of Bernadotte and Kléber alone was uncertain. Augereau and Jourdan were openly and fully on the side of the Triumvirate. This was to be expected from Augereau: what is strange is to find Jourdan practically as violent. When all had been done he still considered the country as only half saved, and wished to go farther. How intense were his prejudices is shown by his resistance to the proposal to re-establish religious liberty and to abolish the system by which a non-juring priest was liable to death. His speech in the *Cinq-Cents* is styled by Sciout: 'Cette grossière et inepte déclamation', better placed in the mouth of his namesake, Jourdan 'Coupe-Tête'. Very possibly the fact that his former co-commander, Pichegru, against whom he had real grievances, was also in the *Cinq-Cents* and was leader of the Opposition, may have helped to embitter him. He was more honourably employed on the 21st August in pronouncing the eulogy of the dead Marceau in the Council, and in obtaining a pension for that General's mother.<sup>1</sup>

We now come to the enigmatic Pichegru. Even now it is hard to say how far he was bound to the Royalist cause, but he was the hope of that party and he was the man who should have led any active opposition. Once when he and Willot had gone to the Directory to remonstrate with the Triumvirate and had been received with disdain, he lost his temper and said: 'Well, we will take to our horses; your Luxembourg is not a Bastille: in a quarter of an hour it will be reduced.' Barras was alarmed, and distributed cartridges and brandy to his guard, but the threat was not followed up. A story (to which I have already alluded) that shows Pichegru's failure to grasp the situation, says that when Rochecotte asked him for twenty men, saying that next day he would seize the Directory, he replied: 'I am here as legislator and not as General,' while in reality his sole strength was his reputation as General. Apparently he had been discouraged by his party's failure to form a proper Guard and to reform the National Guard in time, but his conduct is hard to understand. It is strange if he knew nothing of the danger to himself from the capture of the Klingin correspondence, for the secret was not closely kept. It was not

<sup>1</sup> Phipps, ii. 364-5.

only from the Rhine that Pichegru was menaced, for on the 16th May 1797 Bernadotte, then in command at Trieste, acting under Bonaparte's orders had arrested the Comte d'Antraigues,<sup>1</sup> a Royalist agent, in whose portfolio was found a minute of a conversation which he had had in November 1796 with another agent, the Comte de Montgaillard, when the latter had given him details of his negotiations with Pichegru in 1795. This Bonaparte sent to the Directory, apparently on the 3rd June, and it was retained as one of the proofs that the *coup* which the Triumvirate were preparing was only a measure of self-protection against Royalist plots. It is again strange if nothing of this reached Pichegru, but he seems to have been indifferent to it. In March 1797 he had told another Royalist agent that he knew his removal from his army was caused by the knowledge of the Directory of what he was about, but that he was 'indifferent as to the consequences as he knew they had no proof against him, and that if ever they had he should be informed of it in time.'<sup>2</sup> If he really remained ignorant, he was about the only person in that state. Mathieu Dumas tried to warn him, or at least to ascertain his plans, but he remained, as usual, gloomy and impenetrable; perhaps, as Bernadotte thought, trusting in the supposed power of his name and the credit which he had filched from Hoche and Jourdan. More probably he was incapable of dealing with the situation: indeed he had already described himself as 'l'esclave des circonstances'. Meantime he did much harm to his party, for, whilst he himself would not act or lead, he closed the way to men (like Willot) who were more venturesome and who might have saved themselves by forestalling the Triumvirate.

Kléber, a very peculiar man, was in a very peculiar position. He had broken from his former friend and commander, Jourdan, during the painful retreat of 1796, and he had left the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' as soon as Hoche's nomination to its command was known, possibly disliking Hoche, certainly not liking to be in a subordinate position. Coming to Paris about March 1797, Kléber, never an easy man to please, soon had a fresh grievance. Full of his own prestige, and warmly received by the Minister of War, Petiet, he was presented to the Director Barras, who was probably President at the time. Barras was playing cards,

<sup>1</sup> This incident is described on p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> Wickham, ii. 24.

and for the moment only bowed. Then, the turn completed, he rose and going to Kléber asked him whether he had known certain Generals, after which, no doubt considering he had done all that was necessary and his turn to play having come again, he left the General for the cards. Kléber was furious, and the moment he left the house broke out to Petiet: 'What! is this the way they receive a man who believes he has worthily filled an important post?' 'What do you complain of?' replied the Minister, 'you have been well received: he spoke to you!' 'Ah,' said Kléber, 'if that be the way, never propose to me that I should see another Director'; and he kept his word, giving his bitter tongue full play against all and sundry, and drawing on himself the hatred of such men as Hoche, who no doubt had his correspondents in the Capital. Later, when sounded by the Directory, he assured them: 'I will fire on your enemies, but in facing them I shall turn my back on you.' Bernadotte, who knew him of old, was amused at the way in which Kléber laughed at the embarrassment of one side and the blundering of the other. Still, if there were a disturbance he believed Kléber would look out of the window to see which side had the tricolour cockade, and would join that. But which side had the cockade? Bernadotte had seen Pichegru at Kléber's house, and as the crisis approached Kléber prepared to take his part. His real wishes may well have been to be able to fire on both sides, for whilst he can hardly have trusted Pichegru, the swagger of Augereau and his brags about the Armée d'Italie must also have been most distasteful to him. But could he remain neutral? Hoche hated him, and had probably come into contact with the Kléber faction in the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', when his words would be reported to Kléber. Certainly in the end Kléber was ready to throw in his lot with the Opposition, and, sending for the worthy General Mathieu Dumas, he asked what means of resistance they had. If they were sure of their Guard and of some battalions of the National Guard, as they were on the 13th Vendémiaire, he would not trouble himself about Augereau and his division; and it was very probable that once the affair were begun, the artillery, whose commander was devoted to him, would come over to his side. He spoke with authority, for he was popular with the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', as Hoche knew, and the troops to be used by the Triumvirate came mainly from that



army. Poor Mathieu Dumas could only explain that they had no real force; and though Kléber must have understood that probably he would be one of the victims, he had to remain quiescent whilst the swashbuckler Augereau acted.

Bernadotte was the only one of this group who remained from the beginning to the end uncertain and suspicious of both parties, though bluffed into appearing to support the Triumvirate. Consequently he made much parade of offering his services to the Triumvirate, taking care not to render any and not to appear on the day of the *coup*. Lavalette before the *coup* tried to get Barras to appoint Bernadotte Minister of War, but the Director did not think him sufficiently 'advanced' in principles. When even the swaggering Augereau had shown some signs of indecision, Barras had thought of using Bernadotte as a partner for him, but after sounding him in several interviews he got nothing out of the wary Béarnais but 'vague protestations of eternal devotion, which stopped at nothing'. Consequently Barras ended by preferring Augereau, and Bernadotte adopted something of the same attitude he was to take up during Brumaire, not committing himself to either party. Perhaps his protestations to Bonaparte of his horror of Paris may have been sincere, for there was little but danger to be got in the troubled waters of the Capital.

## XIV

### FRUCTIDOR AND AFTER

(September to December 1797)

The *coup d'état*. The victims. Moreau and Pichegru. The effect on Bonaparte and the Generals. Augereau and 'Allemagne'.

For Contemporary Events see under Chapter IX.

As the moment for action approached, two of the Triumvirate, Larévellière-Lépeaux and Rewbell, became more and more uneasy. They suspected Barras and Augereau of having made their own bargain with the Opposition and with the Royalists; and feared that they, not their foes, might be the victims. That Barras should be capable of selling himself to the Bourbons was probable enough, but that Augereau should follow was absurd. Personal bravery was never a strong point with the civilian authors of the most violent measures of the Revolution, and one can but suspect that in reality the two Directors were much alarmed at the idea of meeting resistance. For instance, Larévellière-Lépeaux, finding that Rewbell was so terrified that he meant to fly, went with him to Barras, where he and his colleague were comforted by being assured that Barras had succeeded in winning over the Guard of the *Corps Législatif*, and that, as he had frequently told them, the *coup* would be made in three or four days. Obviously this did not make them a bit more certain in whose interests Barras was about to strike, although it showed that their intended victims were disarmed. What Barras said of the Guard was true enough, for it had been tampered with. Mathieu Dumas had been trying to get this body reorganized, but had not made much progress. Who was to lead it was an important point. Its present commander was General Ramel, from the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', who was loyal to his duty. It had been proposed, presumably by the Opposition, to supersede him by Kléber, Desaix, or Sérurier, but it was not likely that any of these would take such a post: had they done so, they might have rallied round them many of their former soldiers. The Triumvirate had the nomination, and on the 31st August they appointed General Chérin, a friend of

Hoche and his Chief of the Staff in La Vendée; although Ramel actually retained the post. The Councils most foolishly had never made their Guard altogether independent, so that its commander was partly under the orders of Augereau, a point to be remembered.

At last Barras was ready, and on the night of the 17<sup>me</sup> Fructidor An V (3rd September 1797) he told his colleagues and Augereau that the stroke was for that night. As we have seen,<sup>1</sup> he was well accustomed to such affairs, but his fellow conspirators were not and at once showed alarm; Augereau said he was not ready, and Rewbell, seeing Augereau hesitate, again became panic-stricken and talked of riding away. Barras held firm, and the *coup* was fixed for midnight. Although we have the account of two of the principal actors, Lemoine and Ramel, it is not quite clear what troops were employed, for Lemoine's men were still on the march, or only ordered to march, to the Capital, and the ordinary garrison may have been thought sufficient, as it was 20,392 strong. Lemoine himself was brought up and given command of part of the force to be used, this choice being ominous, for it was he who had been left by Hoche to carry out the bloody work with the captured *émigrés* after Quiberon.<sup>2</sup> At midnight the troops were set in motion; the bridges—the Pont-Neuf and the Pont-Royal—and the principal open places were occupied and had guns placed on them, whilst at daybreak Barras ordered a twenty-four pounder on the Pont-Neuf to be fired: a foolish thing if any resistance were expected, for it gave the alarm and broke all the windows in the neighbourhood. Leaving a strong reserve in the Place de la Concorde, Augereau with one body penetrated into the Tuileries by the Carrousel, whilst Lemoine with 1,000 infantry, 600 cavalry, and four guns, entered by the garden. All this took time, and it was not till 3.30 a.m. on the 18th Fructidor that Lemoine appeared at the Pont-Tournant, the bridge over the ditch in the garden.

The Triumvirate professed only to have acted in anticipation of an attack by their opponents, but the Councils had remained in a marvellous state of security. They knew that the Triumvirate were about to strike: Lavalette wrote the news to Bonaparte, and at last even Carnot learnt that he was to be one of the

<sup>1</sup> See Chapters XI and XII.

<sup>2</sup> Phipps, iii. 43.



victims, but it was decided to let the other side begin and then to resist them. The military leaders chose to place themselves in the trap, for Pichegru was one of the officials of the Councils who had to watch this night in the Tuileries, and Willot remained with him. To them, after the alarm gun had been fired, came the commander of their Guard, Ramel, with alarming news. At 1 a.m. he had been sent for by the Minister of War; columns of troops were pouring into Paris; and the officer commanding the body of cavalry of the Guard of the Councils had marched away over the bridge, at the order of Augereau, taking the two guns placed in the court of the Tuileries. Ramel had referred the order from the Minister to an official of the Councils, one of the Inspectors entrusted with the watch, Rovère, who had made light of the movements of the troops, as a review had been ordered, and who saw no reason why Ramel should not go to the Minister. Ramel, however, rightly suspected that it was wished to get him away from his men, and remained at his post. Now he had received a note from Lemoine, demanding passage for his men over the Pont-Tournant into the Tuileries, to execute the orders of the Government. On Ramel refusing passage, Lemoine had assured him that resistance was useless as he was surrounded by 12,000 men, with forty guns. Pichegru now reconnoitred the position, and then returned to the hall of the *Cinq-Cents*.

In the meantime Lemoine had forced the Pont-Tournant, and Augereau had got in from the Carrousel. The post holding the iron gates of the hall of the *Cinq-Cents*, however, held good, and when Lemoine threatened to blow them in with his guns, the officer in charge told him to fire away. Ramel, for his part, was ready to act, but the members of the Councils told him that all resistance was in vain and prohibited him from firing. Next, at 5.30 a.m., Augereau sent an order to Ramel to take his Guard off to the Quai d'Orsay. Now, strictly speaking, Ramel was under the orders of the officer commanding the division, who was Augereau; but knowing the illegal object of this order—to leave the Councils unprotected—he refused to obey. At last Augereau appeared, surrounded not only by his staff but also by a number of the officers not on the employed list, or who had been dismissed, with whom Paris swarmed. Amongst these men were Santerre, the Brewer-General, and Rossignol, the vile

General of the Armée des Côtes de la Rochelle, both of whom had been with Augereau in La Vendée, and Puget-Barbantane, whom we have seen in command of 'Pyrénées Orientales'.<sup>1</sup> Augereau had primed himself with champagne and was in a state of fury. Telling Ramel that he deserved to be shot, he asked whether he acknowledged him as commander, and on Ramel doing so he ordered him into arrest. In most accounts he is alleged to have torn Ramel's epaulettes from his shoulders, but in reality Ramel was only assaulted by the vile mob who followed Augereau. Indeed, Augereau saved Ramel's life by extricating him from his assailants, with the comfortable assurance that he would be shot next day. Ramel went to his quarters, and his men, exclaiming that they would not be shot down as the Swiss had been who had tried to defend the Palace for Louis XVI, joined Augereau. Pichegru and the other Deputies who were found in the Palace, or who foolishly entered it, were arrested and taken to prison. Barthélemy, the Director, was arrested, but Carnot, though blundering in characteristic style, still managed to escape and to get out of the country. Instead of cutting off the heads of their captives the Triumvirate had determined on using the 'guillotine sec', the slower death by transportation to a pestilential climate. Barthélemy and fifty-three members of the two Councils<sup>2</sup> were accordingly placed in carriages transformed into cages by bars of iron, taken to Rochefort, and thence transported to Sinnamary. Amongst them were Generals Pichegru and Willot and two future Ministers of Napoleon, Portalis and Barbé-Marbois. At the moment of danger Pichegru had behaved with firmness. When an officer had insulted him by calling him 'General of brigands', he replied, 'Yes, when I commanded you'. It is worth remarking that those of the prisoners who had been sent at first to the Temple in Paris found there another prisoner, Sir Sidney Smith. Augereau had not contented himself with the mere performance of military work, but with the Police Minister Sotin had acted as escort to take Barthélemy to the Temple, where Sotin consoled his prisoner by saying, 'Such is the nature of revolutions: we

<sup>1</sup> Général Paul-François-Hilarion-Bienvenu, Marquis de Barbantane (1754-1828). Phipps, iii. 153-5.

<sup>2</sup> For names see Wouters, Félix, *Histoire chronologique de la République et de l'Empire (1789-1815)*, Bruxelles, Wouters frères, 1847, pp. 158-60; Sciout, *Directoire*, ii. 663-4.

triumph to-day, to-morrow perhaps your turn will come.' Then Augereau did the work of a Sergeant at best in calling over the roll of those condemned to transportation, and was enraged when he saw how calmly they took their fate. He had wished for the heads of Pichegru and five or six others, and there can be no doubt that he, as well as the Triumvirate, intended the transportation to be a sentence of death, slower in execution, but not less certain, than the guillotine; for when Barthélemy's servant insisted on sharing the fate of his master, Augereau told him: 'Those men are lost for ever. Whatever events await them, be assured they will never return.' As the servant persisted, 'Well then,' said Augereau, 'go, fanatic, and perish with him. Soldiers, let this man be watched as closely as those miscreants.' It is he who is credited with the idea of turning the carriages which were to take the prisoners to the coast into so many cages by adding bars of iron. All this rage and harshness towards men who had not fired a shot in their own defence was unworthy of a man who on the field was a brave soldier. It is deserving of notice that whilst Bonaparte, an officer of the *ancien régime*, was only anxious that severity should not be the order of the day, Augereau, Hoche, and I fear Jourdan, thought that what was done was all too moderate.

Fructidor had important effects on the fortunes of several of the men with whom we are concerned. To begin with those who suffered, Pichegru, as we have seen, was transported to Sinnamary, or Cayenne. He who had so long figured as 'the Conqueror of Holland', taking the credit due to Jourdan in 1794 as he had tried to take that due to Hoche for the relief of Landau in 1793, was arrested in the hall of the Council to which he belonged, without a shot being fired in his protection. He was destined, in the minds of the Triumvirate, to perish in the colony, but, being a strong, vigorous man, he survived, and in June 1798 managed to escape with Ramel. On the 21st September 1798 he reached Deal. Crossing over to Germany, he openly espoused the cause of the Bourbons, and was supposed to have given advice to the Allies, which they did not follow. On the conclusion of peace between France and the Allies he returned to England, where he engaged in plots against Bonaparte, then First Consul. It is a mark of the weakness and timidity which the Triumvirate displayed amidst all their



violence that, holding clear proofs of his treachery, they did not give him an open trial. Had they done so they would have put an end to the absurd legend which represents him as a General so fortunate and so popular that Napoleon did not venture to try him publicly, but got rid of him by assassination. Curiously enough, we have Bonaparte's opinion on the point at this time. Speaking to Lavalette: 'It was cowardly', he said 'not to have tried Pichegru; the treason was flagrant and the papers more than sufficient to convict him. Considering all things, even if the High Court had acquitted him he would have been no less dishonoured before the army and all France.' It was from such a general condemnation that Pichegru escaped by suicide in 1804.

The fall of Pichegru nearly brought down his friend Moreau, who, as we have seen, had had in his hands for some time proof of the treachery of Pichegru but had not acquainted the Directory with the fact: on the contrary, as he told Napoleon in 1804, he had at first agreed with Desaix, his chief lieutenant, to say nothing about this correspondence. His Chief of the Staff, Reynier, however, had also been told, and such matters can seldom be kept secret for long. As it became evident that a stroke would be tried by one or other party at Paris, two officers, probably Desaix and Reynier, urged him to acquaint the Government, telling him that the matter began to be known and that at Strasbourg, his head-quarters, they were preparing to inform the Directory. Desaix, indeed, far from holding his tongue, had written to General Mathieu Dumas letting him know of the matter, on condition that he would preserve the strictest secrecy and would only use the information to guide his own conduct and that of his friends, according to circumstances. This apparently was some time before the *coup*, and after such a communication all hope of secrecy ought to have been abandoned. Moreau himself probably had been as careless as Desaix, for he had wished to let Saint-Cyr into the secret and had only been prevented by the determination of his lieutenant to keep clear of such matters. Still, it was only on the 3rd September, that is the day before the *coup d'état*, when he knew that affairs in the Capital were approaching a crisis, that Moreau wrote, not to the Directory as a body nor to its President, Larévellière-Lépeaux, but to Barthélemy, who was acting with

Carnot, telling him of the existence of the correspondence.<sup>1</sup> He said that he had decided not to publish it, as peace was presumably about to be concluded and there would no longer be danger to the public; he had been strengthened in his resolve by the fact that it would be proof against but few, no one being named in it. Now, seeing Pichegru at the head of a party, as he was much compromised in the correspondence Moreau deemed it his duty to denounce his treason. The proofs were as clear as day, but he doubted whether they would be so judicially.

All this was obviously very unsatisfactory, for Pichegru had long been at the head of a party, and it was almost certain that the struggle would be decided by the time this letter reached Paris. If the Triumvirate were victorious, Moreau could plead that he had denounced his friend. Were Pichegru the victor, Moreau had been careful to conceal his crime and to acquaint Barthélemy only, who was acting with the General. Indeed, even now he only asked Barthélemy to give him his opinion as to what he should do in such a thorny matter. Later, at Paris, he explained that he had chosen Barthélemy because he had already spoken to him of the correspondence, when Barthélemy had been negotiating at Bâle. To understand fully the position of Moreau and also of Desaix it must be remembered that, far from being neutral, they had been in correspondence with one of the leaders of the Opposition, General Mathieu Dumas, and especially on one important point: the provision of a trustworthy Guard for the Councils. Had the process of exchanging bad characters for good ones from the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' been completed before Fructidor, the Triumvirate probably would have met with active resistance. It was Moreau also who nominated for the command of the Guard Ramel, who had been serving under Desaix and who remained true to his trust. Matters were complicated by the fact that already on the 2nd September 1797, just before their *coup*, the Triumvirate had recalled Moreau to Paris. Moreau professed only to have received this letter late on the 8th September, when ten leagues from his head-quarters at Strasbourg: that is, the letter took at

<sup>1</sup> Saint-Cyr, *Rhin-et-Moselle*, iv. 321; Barras, iii. 47, says the letter was antedated the 3rd September, and Sciout, *Directoire*, iii, gives the date as the 5th September. Moreau said that the letter, dated the 3rd, was dispatched on the 4th; Saint-Cyr, *Rhin-et-Moselle*, iv. 329.

least five and a half days to reach him, which is very improbable. It looks as if, wishing to be at the head of his army when the crisis was reached, he had arranged to receive the dispatch, which he suspected might come, as late as possible. Next, on the 9th September he received the proclamation of the Directory of the 18th Fructidor (4th September), and knew that Pichegru had failed. At once he took part against his friend. He really knew no more than he had done before of the treachery, but now in a proclamation to his army he said: 'It is only too true that Pichegru has betrayed the confidence of the whole of France', adding that he had already informed the Directory of the correspondence, which he now said 'did not leave me in any doubt about this treason'. On the 10th September he started for Paris, believing that he was only required to give information. He knew that Hoche was to join the command of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' to that of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', which that General already held, but he thought this was a temporary measure and was doubtful whether Hoche would accept. In reality the Directory, or at least the Triumvirate, had suspected him for some time. He was not sent back to his army, and although he did obtain other commands under the Directory he remained in a state of half-disgrace until Brumaire.

Desaix too narrowly escaped suffering from Fructidor, for when Moreau did report the Klingin correspondence to the Directory, in his anxiety to show that he had not kept the secret quite to himself he rather needlessly compromised his Chief of the Staff, Reynier, and his leading lieutenant, Desaix, by stating that he had acquainted them with the facts. The Triumvirate very naturally considered these two officers to be as culpable as Moreau himself, and intended to dismiss them both. Desaix, certainly, though not actually connected with the Opposition must have been in full sympathy with them, as we have seen from his actions; and we shall find him ready to support Bonaparte when that General, before going to Egypt, thought of overturning the Directory. Reynier was soon placed on the unemployed list, I presume for the reason I have just given, but Desaix, luckily for himself, was at this moment with Bonaparte in Italy, where we have seen him, and Bonaparte had been much taken with him; the two had become fast allies and Bonaparte defended him so strongly that the Triumvirate had



to cancel his disgrace. His friendly rival Saint-Cyr might have been in the same case, for Moreau, as I have already said, wished to let him into the secret ; but, naturally cautious, and disliking Moreau, he avoided the dangerous confidence. Later, when the departure of Moreau from the army and the death of his temporary successor Hoche brought Saint-Cyr for a moment into the command of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', Reynier proposed to him that they should continue the work of deciphering the documents. The sagacious Saint-Cyr would have none of it. Sealing up all the papers, he sent them to the Directory under an escort ordered to start at latest in half an hour—treating the packet as a sort of shell which it was well should burst outside his district. Consequently he escaped safely on that point, though one doubts whether he were not under suspicion, to Hoche at least, for having been so careful not to commit himself.

Both Desaix and Saint-Cyr belonged to the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', the army which had made no addresses in favour of the Triumvirate and therefore was a good deal 'suspect'. Kléber, a General of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', had a narrower escape than they had, for he had incurred the enmity of Hoche. The two can only have met, if at all, in La Vendée, but, besides Kléber being annoyed at not getting the permanent command of the 'Sambre-et-Meuse', it would seem that there was a mutual dislike between the two Generals, so utterly different in character—the cold, sarcastic Kléber being just the man to vex the boiling Hoche. As I have suggested, Hoche had probably heard a good deal of the quarrels between Kléber and Jourdan, or rather, of the trouble which Kléber had given his commander, and had found that Kléber still had his following in the army. Certainly he hated him bitterly and would have included him with the men to be transported. He told the Triumvirate: 'You have done nothing, since you have left in France the man most dangerous to the Republic, that viper's tongue which has perverted half the officers of the army.' This was part of the personal spite which disfigured Hoche's dying frenzy, for there was no room for doubt of Kléber's republicanism. Although he had been living quietly enough in Paris he had not been unremarked, and his name, with those of Masséna and Moncey, had been mentioned for the vacancy in the Directory caused by the retirement of Letourneur in May 1797, which had been filled by

Barthélemy. Carnot had been opposed to the nomination of any General, and according to Barras had denounced not only Kléber but also Jourdan, Lefebvre, and Augereau. Possibly the dislike of Carnot was a passport to the favour of the Triumvirate; and one would like to think that even Jourdan may have shielded his insubordinate lieutenant, who was linked with so many of his triumphs. He may also have found the same powerful protector as Desaix. Bernadotte on arrival at Paris had reported to Bonaparte Kléber's wish to see the fields of glory in Italy; Bernadotte even said he would bring Kléber with him when he returned to Bonaparte: 'He will be enchanted to know the man whom he has so often admired for his great deeds and for his captures of colours and of prisoners, but still more for his handling of the reins of government.' That is to say, just as Desaix was abandoning Moreau, believing that that General could do nothing great, so also Kléber was ready to place himself under Bonaparte. Whatever the cause, Hoche did not have his wish, and Kléber remained living quietly at Paris, on the Chaillot hill, in the street since called 'des Batailles'. He was soon joined by Moreau, for whom he had a friendship which probably would not have stood the experience of a campaign. In his case, as in that of Desaix, it was probably the danger he had run and his disgust with politics which made him ready to serve under Bonaparte in the Armée d'Angleterre, and then to follow him to Egypt.

Moncey, of all men, was one of the sufferers from Fructidor. The worthy old General, since the breaking up of his Armée des Pyrénées Occidentales<sup>1</sup> on the conclusion of peace with Spain in 1795, had been in command of the local (11th) Military Division at Bordeaux, where he had won golden opinions, purging the country of brigands; and his Department would have elected him to the *Anciens* in April 1797 had he not decisively refused the honour. Other things were thought of for him by his friends: the embassy at Madrid, which it seemed likely Pérignon would soon vacate, the Ministry for War instead of Hoche, and even the vacancy in the Directory for which Barthélemy was actually elected. Unfortunately for him one of the friends thus supporting him was General Willot, his former subordinate in Spain, who had been commanding at Marseilles. Although he had

<sup>1</sup> Phipps, iii, Chapter XII.

conducted himself 'comme un ange', still he had incurred the wrath of Bonaparte, and he was now, as we have seen, one of the leaders of the Opposition. Then also Pichegru was a friend of Moncey's, and after leaving the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' came to live near him at the dismantled abbey of Bellevaux, which he had bought. The two constantly met when Moncey was at his home, at fishing parties, dinners, and other entertainments. When Moncey was at Bordeaux and Pichegru at Paris an intimate correspondence was maintained between the two Generals, but apparently not on politics. A suspicion of Royalism hung about Moncey, and even before Fructidor his two former subordinates, Generals Frégeville and Marbot,<sup>1</sup> had worked against him in the Councils: Marbot, an extreme Jacobin, attacked him openly in the *Anciens*. At Fructidor, when the papers of Pichegru were seized, Moncey's correspondence with him and with Willot was found. His friendship with these two and with Carnot was charged against him, whilst the men who were using the army to enable them to keep their places considered it a criminal ambition on his part to think of being a Minister and even a Director. A former remark of his on La Vendée, showing a most 'suspect' dislike of shedding French blood, was brought up against him, and on the 26th October 1797 he was deprived of his command, when he retired to Camiade, near Bayonne, in pecuniary straits, for he had had to sell his patrimony to cover his expenses as commander.

Whilst Moncey, who had commanded in the western Pyrenees, was thus disgraced, Pérignon, who had commanded on the east of the same range,<sup>2</sup> by a curious coincidence met the same fate. Sent after peace with Spain as ambassador to Madrid, he had been well received by his former opponents, and on the 29th August 1796 had signed with them at San Ildefonso an offensive and defensive alliance against England. Later, in 1797, he had been instructed to begin negotiations for the cession to France of Louisiana and Western Florida in return for an increase of territory to Parma, but this the Directory broke off. A sensible, quiet man, Pérignon was not in accord with the violent foreign policy of the Triumvirate, one of the points about which they were at variance with Carnot also. Threats and rudeness they

<sup>1</sup> Phipps, iii. 203 and note 3; 211 and note 6.

<sup>2</sup> Phipps, iii. 197, &c.



thought should be used against all the Powers with whom they had to deal, and the fact that their ambassador was on good terms with the Court to which he was accredited made him 'suspect' to them. He believed that it was to the interest of France to support Godoy, and he appears to have been on the most friendly terms with the Prince, even warning him to be more careful to guard himself. Indeed his only difficulty with the Royal favourite seems to have been on the subject of the expulsion from Spain of the French refugees, which the Directory desired but against which Godoy held firm. In the eyes of the Triumvirate all this proved Pérignon to be but the valet of the Prince; and they even accused him of using his position for his own interests and of meddling with dishonourable matters of trade, a charge in all probability totally unfounded. He may also have been under some suspicion of sympathy with the Royalists. Louis XVIII had his ambassador at Madrid, the Duc de Havre, Prince de Croy, but the two could hardly have met except in public. The Triumvirate, and indeed the whole Directory, were very jealous of any General mixing in politics, and it may have been remembered that after Vendémiaire Pérignon had been elected by the Department of Haute-Garonne as one of the new third of the Legislature which the Convention had permitted to be selected. He did not accept, but as so many of the new members belonged to the Opposition or to the Royalists the fact of election may have counted against him. It was probably the support of Carnot which had kept him in his post. The Triumvirate, however, had determined to shelve him, and, wishing to get rid of the Minister for the Marine, Admiral Truguet, a violent Jacobin, they appointed him on the 13th November 1797 to replace Pérignon, although he did not take up his post till February 1798. Godoy gave way to Truguet's demand for the departure of the French *émigrés*, but became so unpopular in consequence that he had to leave the Ministry on the 28th March 1798, whilst Truguet soon made himself impossible. Pérignon remained unemployed until he was given a command in the Armée d'Italie of 1798.

As for Bernadotte, once the blow was struck successfully he appeared, explaining how wrong the Triumvirate had been not to send for him. He wrote to Bonaparte describing accurately enough the indifference with which the first news of the blow

had been received by the people of the Capital, and he referred again to the plan suggested by some persons of letting the Directory rule alone for a time; but whilst writing in a spirit favourable to the *coup*, it is evident that he had his misgivings still and was uncertain as to the future. To do him justice, he was always ready to take action for a friend, and he now exerted himself to save Merle d'Ambert, who had commanded the Marine regiment in which he himself had served before the Revolutionary wars, and whom he had already saved from the Marseilles mob in 1790.<sup>1</sup> D'Ambert was now condemned as an *émigré*; he did gain a respite, but the execution finally took place. Though only half believing Bernadotte's assurances to them, the Directory were willing to please him, and we have seen how he toyed with the idea of different commands offered by them.<sup>2</sup> When he started to return to 'Italie' about the 3rd October he took with him a request to Bonaparte from one of the new Directors, François de Neufchâteau, for a supply of bronze for a statue of Liberty in the Place de la Concorde. It was in the best gun-metal that Bonaparte did eventually supply 'Liberty'. Bonaparte had made Bernadotte's absence one of his grievances against the Directory, who now wrote: 'You regret General Bernadotte: he has rejoined you. He will have shown you still better than dispatches, which are mute, the true intentions of the Directory.' On that point Bernadotte spoke more favourably of the Directory than did Lavalette, who had arrived previously. Cautious as he had been, the events in Paris, and perhaps seeing the part played by such a man as Augereau, had rather turned Bernadotte's head and made him believe that the Jacobins had the winning card, as indeed his conduct in the next year was to show. He believed that he had the promise of the Ministry of War, and was aspiring to something higher than the command of a mere division. Bonaparte guessed his ambition, but doubted his capacity for ministerial office.

Augereau, with whom I deal later, had not the brains necessary to enable him to gain real advantage from his success; Bonaparte was too far, and was practically held by the enemy to Italy, nor had he assisted the Triumvirate in any direct way, except by the mere mission of Augereau. It was Hoche who had furnished the troops and the money for the *coup* so dear to his

<sup>1</sup> Phipps, i. 203.

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, pp. 217-21.

heart, and the success should have taken him high: indeed the Directory at once gave him command of the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', from which Moreau had been recalled, as well as his own force, the 'Sambre-et-Meuse'. He thus had under him Saint-Cyr, Davout, and Oudinot, with Desaix on his way from Italy, besides his own men, Lefebvre, Soult, Ney, and Mortier. He was not yet thirty, active and ambitious, when he thus received the command of all the forces on the Rhine frontier except the inactive Armée du Nord, which was soon to disappear. He had long dreaded the growing influence of the Royalists in the Capital, and it had become a personal matter with him to strike down the party which was making such great, and, although he did not acknowledge that, such legal progress. His own personal rebuff had but intensified his longing for the stroke his troops were to deliver. Excited and ill from his excesses,<sup>1</sup> he had refused to leave his army, telling his doctor that all he wanted was a remedy for fatigue. He was in bed at his head-quarters at Wetzlar when, at 5 a.m. on the 7th September, he received a message from Barras telling him of the results of the 18th Fructidor. Leaping from his bed, he woke his staff to come and rejoice with him, and he cried to his doctor: 'I do not want you any more, my cold is cured: here's the remedy,' showing the letter. The effort was too much and he all but fainted. Once he was revived Hoche poured out his soul to a friend in Paris, perhaps Chérin, and to the Minister for War, and nothing is so instructive as to mark the difference between the way he and Bonaparte received the news. Bonaparte, a better politician, at once perceived the danger of the Triumvirate being tempted to vengeance; Hoche lamented what seemed to him their mildness. Not a single name in those deported, that is, destined for a slow death, was too many for him: it was the omissions over which he grieved. What names would he have inserted? It is significant that his two admiring biographers think it best to leave blanks in these important letters; one, Rousselin, explaining the omissions in what he styles 'the death song of the swan', as due to motives on his part of patriotism as well as of prudence. The prudence we can well understand when we know what Hoche wrote of Kléber. Pichegru he well

<sup>1</sup> Cuneo d'Ornano, *Hoche*, ii. 196, 298, 302, 321-3; Bruce, H. A., *Life of General Sir William Napier*, 2 vols., London, Murray, 1864. See vol. i, p. 506.



may have hated, and he had probably good grounds for a personal dislike to Kléber; but even such a man as the worthy General Mathieu Dumas did not escape from his desire for punishment: 'Qu'est devenu Mathieu Dumas? Je gage que ce fameux intrigant surnagera.' And in this he was right, for Mathieu Dumas, escaping, lived to serve the Empire. Nor was all his venom kept for the politicians in Paris: he wished to dismiss some of the Generals with the armies, especially, it would seem, in the 'Rhin-et-Moselle'; and though he was dying he had time to carry out a *coup* of his own in the army, dismissing or sending to Paris in arrest Generals who had shown hesitation or unwillingness to see their troops employed illegally. One wonders whether Saint-Cyr and Desaix were included among the intended victims. Bonaparte certainly was, for whilst dying Hoche found strength to charge General Debelle, his brother-in-law, to warn Barras that Bonaparte should be watched; that he had much money and much power, and that without having material proof that he aimed at independence and perhaps at tyranny, he (Hoche) had observed and been told enough to caution the Directory on that point. This is probably true, though Barras must have known much more than Hoche about Bonaparte's arbitrary disposition. However, the untrustworthiness of the memoirs of Barras is shown by his representing Hoche as wishing to pardon the conquered, and to cover 'with the mantle of indulgence' those who had erred at Fructidor 'sans méchanceté et sans trahison'. Hoche's biographers, on the contrary, depict him as dying with the fury of a wild beast caught in a trap. His death took place on the 15th September at Wetzlar.<sup>1</sup>

Much may be excused to an hysterical man, weakened by disease, but the contrast of Hoche's utterances with those of Bonaparte is striking. Behind Bonaparte's angry shrieks it is easy to discern the man with an object, and it does not need his own assurance to convince us that the beat of his pulse was undisturbed by his loudest outbursts of anger. His harshest acts were dictated by a long-ranging policy, and when he struck the hardest it was not for personal revenge but for the sake of example: as in the case of the Vendéan chiefs in 1801, when he recked little which of them stood before the firing party as long

<sup>1</sup> Phipps, ii. 442-4.

as the volley was heard over the insurgent district and awed the men whom he wished to subdue.<sup>1</sup> Had Frotté laid down his arms he would have been left as undisturbed as his better advised friends. Condemn the policy if you like, but its statecraft cannot be denied; for, however one may be horrified at the death of the Duc d'Enghien, for instance, the effect of the example told on the Bourbons and their supporters. In Bonaparte's councils Royalist and Jacobin were soon to meet, free, as they were to live under his rule once revolt were abandoned. With Hoche it is the personal hatred, the bitter animosity, that one feels. It is not enough for him that the men who opposed his opinions should be on their way to a slow death, caged as so many wild animals, and that all resistance should be at an end. He wants more, misses so many in the melancholy procession, and longs to strike those Generals who have not shared his opinions. It was well that Hoche died young. Such a man could never have rebuilt the nation as Bonaparte did, and it was better for France to fall into the hands of the Imperial Despot than of the Republican Hero.

Bonaparte, thanks very much to the good advice of Lavalette, had remained practically quiescent and had kept clear of a very vile business. Although he had expressed approval of the action of Augereau, his long silence before the *coup* had vexed that General and had angered the Triumvirate. It is said, and again it is denied, that he had thought of becoming a Director himself, getting an exemption from the law requiring a Director to be 30 years old; but the example of Hoche must have shown him the danger of this. His position of mere observer must have been trying to a man accustomed to act for himself, and his bursts of passion show that the strain told on him. Then the attitude of the Triumvirate, or rather of the new Directory, towards him, changed. They had been irritated by his failure to supply the funds they required, but still it was to him that they had to look for money. Hoche was dead; they knew the character of Augereau; they distrusted Moreau, Desaix, Kléber, and probably Saint-Cyr. Only Bonaparte remained, and their

<sup>1</sup> 'Mais ces mesures ont un but, presque toujours effrayer les partis par un exemple terrible. Quant aux questions de personnes, son indifférence est quelque chose de vraiment étrange, tant elle est grande.' Martel, *Les Historiens fantaisistes*; M. Thiers, *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire*, 2 vols., Paris, Dentu, 1883-5. See vol. ii. 188.

terror was great when he threatened to resign. Thence came what their Secretary rightly called their '*docilité républicaine*'. They would do anything to please him: Kellermann should be dismissed, Bernadotte sent back, his secretary, Bourrienne, erased from the list of *émigrés*. If they had elevated Augereau, had it not been on Bonaparte's recommendation? They soon shelved that pretentious commander. Bonaparte therefore was left in a higher position than he had yet occupied, being practically the protector of the Directory, but distrusting them as much as they distrusted him. He well understood the danger of his situation: a defeat, or the rise of another commander, would be fatal to him. Still, for the moment he was pleased with the result of Fructidor. After hearing Lavalette's viva voce account he dwelt on the mixture of violence and weakness which the Triumvirate had shown. It was cowardice not to have tried Pichegru, and with very characteristic wisdom he said: '*La force, quand on ne peut faire autrement, soit; mais quand on est le maître, justice vaut mieux.*' Then, summing up the situation: '*Taking all things into consideration, this revolution will have been a vigorous slash of the whip given to the nation.*' Here he was quite wrong, as he was to find. The men who had secured the reins of government were incapable of directing the nation. It was their weakness and jealousy that sent him, or allowed him to go, to Egypt, and that in his absence caused the disasters and almost the ruin of France. It was Fructidor that made Brumaire not only possible, but necessary.

Augereau was the one of the group with which we are concerned who might have been expected to be the chief gainer by Fructidor, but his reward soon dwindled to nothing. At first he had continued in submission to Bonaparte, and had reported: '*Enfin, mon général, ma mission est remplie, et les promesses de l'Armée d'Italie ont été acquittées cette nuit*'; but the silence of Bonaparte and the reserved attitude of the A.D.C. Lavalette, followed by his open opposition, annoyed him. Now, speaking to Lavalette, he was foolish enough to treat Bonaparte lightly, whilst he boasted of Fructidor as if it had been a greater object of pride than Arcola. '*Do you know*', he said, '*that you deserve to be shot for your conduct? But be tranquil and count on me.*' Lavalette had already listened to similar threats from Barras and only smiled at those of Augereau, who must have understood



what sort of report would be made by the A.D.C. to Bonaparte. He must also have known the very arbitrary character of his commander, and how little any interference with the Armée d'Italie would be permitted; yet, continuing to write civilly to Bonaparte, he took on himself to send an A.D.C. of his own to Italy with a sort of circular to the Generals, describing Fructidor, and enclosing copies of the secret correspondence of General Clarke with the Directory. Not content with acting in this way, as if he had some authority over the army, Augereau actually got the Minister of War to authorize his A.D.C. to claim 600,000 francs from the army. The rage of Bonaparte can be conceived. Augereau to touch *his* army indeed! He ordered the Paymaster of the army not to pay anything, and sending for the A.D.C., Deverine—perhaps the 'ci-devant moine, qu'il fallait aussi surveiller', of whom Larévellière-Lépeaux speaks<sup>1</sup>,—gave him such a reprimand as sent him back to Paris deep in despair and astonishment. To the Directory Bonaparte wrote with one of his screams of passion, asking them if they were going to treat him as they had done Pichegru after Vendémiaire, and tendering his resignation, for nothing on earth would make him serve after this horrible mark of ingratitude from the Government. Clarke also took up the matter with a high hand. His real offence was having informed the Directory of some of the malversations of Augereau; and, strong in the support of Bonaparte, he also issued a circular to the Generals of 'Italie': Augereau had stated that he had called them an 'amas de brigands', but this he styled a 'stupide calomnie'. The Directory came down on their knees; Augereau, they said, had only meant to give an antidote to the poison sent to Italy by the Royalists. The 'lettre mystérieuse' of the Minister only applied to the travelling expenses of the A.D.C. Bonaparte should take care lest the conspirators who had poisoned Hoche should try to disgust him. He could count on the Directory, as they were sure they could on him. Clarke was recalled but Bonaparte undertook his defence, and although Clarke's powers as a plenipotentiary were annulled, he remained with the army, employed at Passariano, until the 21st October 1797, that is, till the treaty was signed. After this he fell ill, and only left for France on the 15th November, not long before Bonaparte

<sup>1</sup> Larévellière-Lépeaux, ii. 197-8.

left for Rastadt. He was recommended for employment in military work with the Armée d'Angleterre, but he was not placed again in the War Office and got no post till the autumn of 1798. Augereau had to pocket the affront; and there was no open breach between him and Bonaparte, who on the 13th September told him that the whole army had given their plaudits 'à la sagesse et l'énergie', which he had displayed, whilst adding a significant hint that moderation should now be shown.

His presence in the Capital being no longer required, the Directory made haste to remove such a potential danger to themselves as a vain and successful General, and on the 23rd September Augereau was sent to command the two armies on the Rhine, the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' and the 'Rhin-et-Moselle', which nominally became one force, the Armée d'Allemagne. In reality they remained two separate bodies, the 'Rhin-et-Moselle' being styled the right, and the 'Sambre-et-Meuse' the left wing.<sup>1</sup> Augereau made no attempt to carry out the purging of the officers proposed by Hoche; indeed he seems to have tried to be on friendly terms with both Desaix and Saint-Cyr, but he got rid of Reynier, Chief of the Staff to Moreau, whom he sent to watch the coasts of Belgium. His personal appearance made a great sensation. Both of the Rhine armies, partly from taste, partly from force of circumstances, had always been modest in dress and equipment: indeed Desaix was fond of appearing in plain clothes, which sometimes exposed him to annoyance. It was different in Italy, where part of the contributions wrung from the country shone in gold on the uniforms of officers and men, instead of the cheaper cotton which took its place with the Rhine troops. The people of Strasbourg and the troops turned out to enjoy the spectacle of the new commander, who was covered with gold lace from head to foot, his boots not being overlooked in the golden shower, and who was surrounded by a crowd of Generals and of the men who had come with him from Paris to share his fortunes. His wife was equally splendid, for she drove about in a state carriage from Italy, which was lined in white, picked out with gold, and she was always escorted by a detachment of Hussars. Saint-Cyr and Macdonald

<sup>1</sup> Pajol, ii. 33, dates the formation of 'Allemagne' as the 20th October 1797, but on the 14th October Augereau styles himself chief of that force: Saint-Cyr, *Rhin*, iv. 330. Phipps, ii. 444-5, for position and future of this force.

sneered, and it is amusing to read the disdain of what Carlyle would have called the high-sniffing Macdonald when he saw his new chief at the theatre at Cologne. Augereau had insisted on having what he called a revolutionary piece, the *Brutus* or the *Mort de César* of Voltaire. By his side sat Lefebvre, who, without his swagger, was as rough as he, and who, honest man, was much pleased with the play and, whilst applauding loudly, in the full belief that it had been written for the occasion kept on digging his elbows into the sides of the indignant Macdonald, asking, 'Tell me, tell me, who is the b— who wrote this? Is he here?' After all, angry as Macdonald was at such ignorance, it is something for Lefebvre that he knew a good thing when he heard it.

Glorious as Augereau was in his own dress, he did not appreciate the fine appearance and strict discipline of his new troops. 'I see,' he told Macdonald, 'and I know, that they treat these troops in the Prussian style, but I will put that to rights.' Then, when the men crowded round him, he spoke to them of the campaigns in Italy and of how well the men there were treated; there was not one, however bad he might be, who had not ten *louis* in his pocket and a gold watch. 'C'était un avis pour les nôtres', adds Macdonald. Before Augereau arrived the Austrians and the French had been on most friendly terms, mixing with one another; but the motley staff of Fructidorien officers whom he brought with him, and who gave him some trouble, made the Austrians fear he would carry on a revolutionary propaganda, and they forbade all communication between the two forces. His efforts, however, were directed to preparing for the campaign, protecting the patriots, punishing the *émigrés*, and selling and distributing the property of the Church.<sup>1</sup> He wanted two lieutenants to command his two wings, and Lefebvre, who got on well with him, at once accepted the command of the left, the former 'Sambre-et-Meuse', which indeed had been under him as senior General since the death of Hoche. With the right, the former 'Rhin-et-Moselle', there was some difficulty. Augereau wished this wing to be taken by Saint-Cyr, but that General disliked him too much to take the post and would only accept the charge of the two divisions he had held under Moreau. Then

<sup>1</sup> Rambaud, A., *Les Français sur le Rhin* (1792-1804), 3rd edition, Paris, Didier, 1883, pp. 301-2.



Desaix returned from Italy about the 19th October 1798. On his way through Germany he had tried to negotiate with the Bavarians about their contributions, the matter which had nominally led to his visit to Bonaparte, but the rumour of his dismissal was spread, and told against him. He himself had believed that he would be dismissed, and had intended to ask Bonaparte for a place in his army or on his fleet, for he could not bear remaining idle. Bonaparte's protection, as I have said, saved him, and he accepted from Augereau the command of the right, his old force. On the 1st November, however, he went to take temporary command of the Armée d'Angleterre, till Bonaparte could join it. Augereau again offered the command of the right to Saint-Cyr, who would have refused again, but as his comrades feared they might have a Fructidor General he at last accepted.

This seems a suitable place to mention the curious incident which took place between Augereau and Bonaparte when the latter was on his way to Rastadt in November 1797. It is differently related by several writers, but I think the account of Lavalette is probably correct. Bonaparte had to pass through Offenbach, the head-quarters of Augereau, and, stopping at his door, sent word that he was too much in a hurry to descend but that he wished to see the General for a moment. Augereau had forgotten his former position, and sent down word that he was engaged at his toilette. Bonaparte drove on, and though the General, better advised, sent messages after him, he would not stop. For the moment Augereau was furious. He wanted to punish General Montrichard, who had furnished a guard of honour which had escorted Bonaparte through Offenbach, and only desisted when it was pointed out to him that Saint-Cyr probably had given the order. Then, two days later, he wrote to offer a sort of explanation: Bonaparte had fallen on him as from the clouds: 'C'est un mauvais tour que vous avez joué à un de vos anciens lieutenans,' who, if he had been warned, would certainly not have missed the pleasure of embracing him; and he sent an A.D.C. to offer a carriage and horses. Bonaparte probably took no notice of this letter, too little submissive for his taste. Returning to his angry mood, Augereau gave orders that no escort should be given to his former chief. The opportunity for showing this childish spite soon came, for Bonaparte

was too restless to remain negotiating at Rastadt, and in a few days started again on his way to the Capital. He would have passed through Strasbourg unnoticed, but General Dommartin, who commanded the artillery there, took a party of artillery, with a flag, and himself met his former commander. This attitude of Augereau was in striking contrast to that of other Generals; Dufour, at Bâle, had said, 'I do not understand oratory: I will compare you neither to Turenne nor to Montecuculli; I shall say only, "Bonaparte is the greatest man in the universe."' What, asks Barras, aptly enough, would Dufour have said if he had understood oratory? The baser side of Augereau was to be shown again, and both men doubtless remembered this incident when in 1814 Napoleon, on his way to Elba, met his lieutenant for the last time.

The significance to us of Fructidor can now be realized. The army, so long almost abject in its submission to the Government, had asserted its power, and the fact that the majority of the Directory agreed with it does not alter the importance of its action. Finding that the majority of the *Corps Législatif*, the official representatives of the Nation, was not in accord with its opinion, the army had deliberately 'purged' both the Councils and the Directory. The extraordinary thing is the slow but determined manner in which the blow was prepared, the helplessness of the intended victims, and the indifference of Paris. The population of the Capital had been not only disarmed, but cowed, by Vendémiaire, and they now cared little who were their masters, all seemed so bad. The regicides were at war with one another, and the 'honnêtes gens' thought only of their pleasures. As Lamarque told Moncey in July, 'They talk of the public spirit of Paris—and here they occupy themselves neither with politics, the army, nor with legislation: "Where is the ball?" "What piece is played to-night?": these are the bases on which all conversations turn; here they are no more Royalist than Terrorist or Constitutionalist: they are all completely "Quietist".' Noel, an officer and a disinterested observer, says the people remained utterly indifferent;<sup>1</sup> so does Bernadotte, although he asserts that enthusiasm followed the first aloofness, but this enthusiasm, if it existed, was not of a durable nature,

<sup>1</sup> Noel, J., *Souvenirs d'un officier du premier Empire (1795-1832)*, Paris, Berger-Levrault, 1895.

and Larévellière-Lépeaux, one of the triumphant Directors, was wise enough when, hearing that there were shouts for him, he thought that he himself might soon be attacked—as happily was to be the event. With the army master of the situation, and the purged Directory and Councils ready to carry out its will, we are getting very near Brumaire.





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